COTTO VS. ALVAREZ

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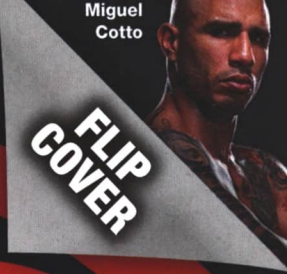

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"I'M A STRONGER, MORE MATURE FIGHTER. FOR ME, THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR THIS."

WHO WINS?

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UNRIVALED RIVALRY

MEXICO VS. PUERTO RICO MATCHUPS BRING DRAMA

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The fans are already geared up for the Miguel Cotto–Canelo Alvarez fight on Nov. 21.

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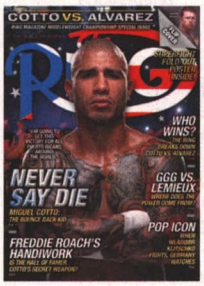

FLIP COVER
TURN THE MAGAZINE OVER FOR THE RING'S FEATURES ON MIGUEL COTTO.

ALVAREZ COVER PHOTO BY GREG GORMAN

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Popular Paulie Malignaggi reveals his top opponents in Best I've Faced.

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A FAN OF COTTO

Miguel Cotto is worthy of respect for more than one reason.

I'll always admire Miguel Cotto.

Of course, he has a tremendous record as a fighter, one that will lead him directly into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. He has avoided no one, almost always wins and, very important to me, he entertains. Everyone loves watching Miguel Cotto fight.

There is more to it than that, though. I also have tremendous respect for his resilience and – surprise, surprise – the way he interacts with people.

The resilience is obvious. Cotto took a tremendous beating and lost a welterweight title against Antonio Margarito in 2008 but bounced back to win another major belt in his next fight seven months later.

He lost a one-sided fight and that title to Manny Pacquiao in 2009 but rebounded again, winning a junior middleweight belt in his subsequent fight and avenging his loss to Margarito two fights after that.

He lost back-to-back fights – to Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Austin Trout – in 2012, which appeared to be a crisis. Many believed he was finished at 32. Instead, he joined forces with trainer Freddie Roach and reclaimed his accustomed position of major player once more.

He punctuated his latest comeback by stopping Sergio Martinez to win the RING middleweight championship, which he'll defend against Canelo Alvarez on Nov. 21 in Las Vegas on HBO Pay-Per-View.

Cotto's ability to survive the lows to reach new highs cannot be underestimated. His mental toughness is remarkable.

Then there is Cotto the person. The Puerto Rican is soft-spoken but he's genuine. Nothing about him is B.S., which is refreshing. He doesn't say much but says what he believes and doesn't care what people think.

His personality probably has cost him fans in his native Puerto Rico, who still adore Cotto's much more flamboyant predecessor Felix Trinidad. I suspect that's OK with him. He has the love of those close to him and, he says, that's all that matters.

Freddie Roach, his trainer, has become family to him. Cotto acknowledges that he went to Roach to determine what he had left after the back-to-back losses. Three fights later, he is back at the top of the boxing world.

Cotto hasn't boasted, as some others would. Instead, he has given all credit to Roach, to whom he is now fully devoted. He has been asked more than once to comment on something Roach has said and he responds the same way: "If Freddie believes it, I believe it."

I've seen (and admired) such devotion to a mentor many times but, because a fighter of Cotto's stature is involved, I found it particularly touching.

Cotto has demonstrated time and again that he's a great boxer. He's at least as good a person. How could anyone root against this guy?

The RING

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Heavyweight contenders Antonio Tarver (left) and Steve Cunningham received a draw for all their hard work on Aug. 14.

COME OUT WRITING

CANELO-COTTO: 50-50

Miguel Cotto vs. Canelo Alvarez will be either the matchup we have all be waiting for or validation that Miguel Cotto is finished as an elite fighter. Cotto has looked good as of late with Freddie Roach in his corner but he has faced an aged and debilitated Sergio Martinez and B- or C-level competition. Canelo, meanwhile, has looked amazing post-Floyd Mayweather Jr., demonstrating good skill, power and a solid chin in destructions of Alfredo Angulo and James Kirkland sandwiching a solid performance against the hard-to-watch Erislandy Lara. The recent past shouldn't matter as this is the Mexico vs. Puerto Rico rivalry and the fighters have styles that match up perfectly for action. So flip a coin because it's a 50-50 fight.

Albert Baker
Irvine, Calif.

COTTO'S RESURRGENCE

Wow! What a difference a couple of years can make! I will be honest: I thought Miguel Cotto was shot in 2012. Then, in 2013, he hooks up with Freddie Roach and whacks out Delvin Rodriguez that October. He then fights Sergio Martinez in June of 2014 and hands "Maravilla" a beating, although Martinez was fighting on one leg and might as well have been on crutches ... but I digress. Now Cotto will be fighting Canelo Alvarez on Nov. 21. I see a good fight. Canelo is the younger fighter with less wear and tear. I think he stops Cotto in the middle rounds.

Dave Maez
Englewood, Colo.

PBC: UP AND DOWN

The PBC series has been insanely up and down. Don't get me wrong, I love the free shows being broadcast on such a regular basis, with many compelling matchups. However, the inconsistency bothers me. There are so many great fighters under the PBC banner yet not nearly a representative number of competitive fights. For every Leo Santa Cruz-Abner Mares showdown, there are four that are tune-up fights designed to showcase one fighter, with a predictable outcome. It's just not fair to the fans to showcase those matches over more meaningful fights. And it's not as if Al Haymon doesn't have a big enough stable to consistently make better matches. For me it's a love-hate relationship right now with the PBC. And it will continue to frustrate me until the competitive matches outweigh the easy victories.

Jamie Rebner
Montreal

BAD FOR THE SPORT?

I was ecstatic when Al Haymon started PBC. Now I see it as bad for the sport. How are Austin Trout vs. Joey Hernandez or Anthony Dirrell vs. Marco Antonio Rubio headliners? I feel that Haymon has stretched his stable too thin with multiple time-buys. He doesn't have the talent to fill the dates and we are getting inundated with matchups that don't interest the public or hardcore fans. There is an abundance of quality fighters, especially at welterweight, but they aren't fighting each other. Is Haymon going to try and put on a major PPV headlined by Keith Thurman vs. Danny Garcia? Would it make financial success for him to take these guys off of network TV? What do we have to look forward to? HBO seems all but defeated. Showtime doesn't show as many fights anymore. Haymon owns all the airtime and is filling it with insulting fights. What's out there for us?

Mike Poller
Winston Salem, N.C.

IN SUPPORT OF PBC

Al Haymon's decision to put championship boxing back on network TV is a necessary response to a changing sports environment and a brilliant game-changer. Televising top-level fights only on cable and PPV has created exclusivity at the expense of a broader audience. And because of MMA, boxing has to create a bigger audience from the ground up. That's what MMA does and why it has grown so rapidly.

Brad Morris
Astoria, N.Y.

MCDONNELL-KAMEDA

I gotta say I'm pretty disappointed by the decision that Tomoki Kameda dropped to Jamie McDonnell on Sept. 5. I'm even more disappointed with how many people seem to disagree on social media. It was a very entertaining and competitive match for sure. I give McDonnell credit for the amount of pressure he applied and the consistent jab he pumped throughout. However, I felt Kameda showed excellent ring generalship staying out of danger and effectively coming in to land a succession of blows and then getting back out of danger. I guess it comes down to judging preference and what you value more. I would take Kameda's quality over McDonnell's quantity any day, though.

Davis Clouse
Omaha, Neb.

CORRECTION

THE RING inadvertently printed the opening paragraph of Thomas Hauser's column twice in the November 2015 issue. The editors regret the error.

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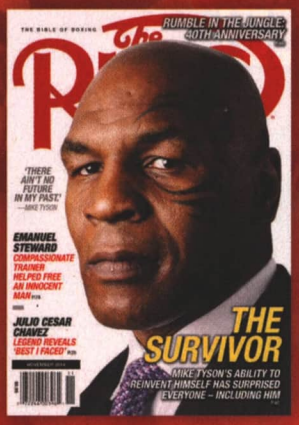

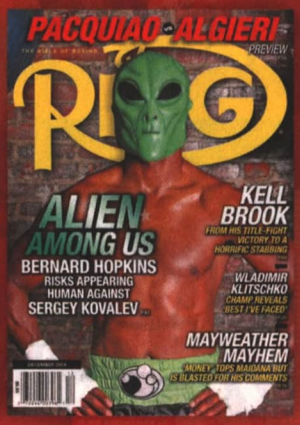

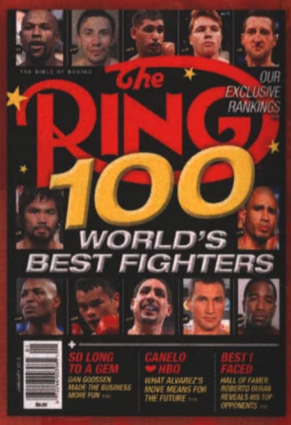

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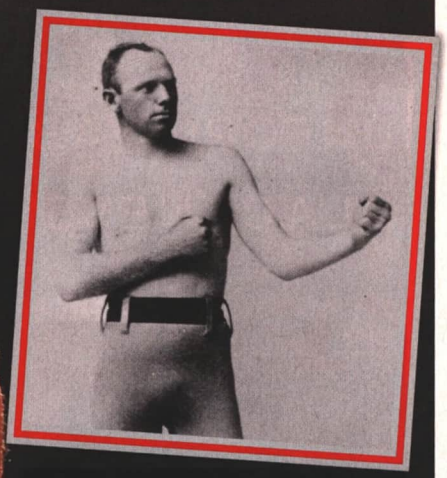
ADVANCED DEGREES



Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, in honor of Tyson Fury's attempt to take Wladimir Klitschko's titles, we connect Fury with the first heavyweight champ from the U.K. – Bob Fitzsimmons, whose last fight was more than 100 years ago, in 1914. It took us 11 steps. Can you do it in fewer?

BOB FITZSIMMONS fought

JACK JOHNSON, who fought

BEARCAT WRIGHT, who fought

MAX BAER, who fought

JOE LOUIS, who fought

ROCKY MARCIANO, who fought

ARCHIE MOORE, who fought

MUHAMMAD ALI, who fought

GEORGE FOREMAN, who fought

EVANDER HOLYFIELD, who fought

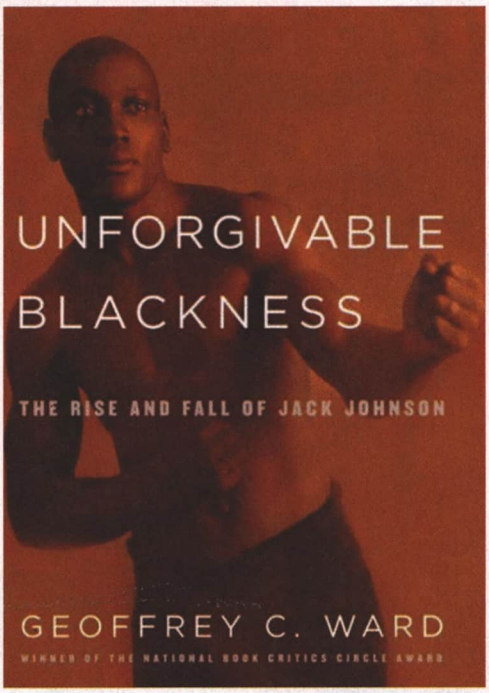
VINNY MADDALONE, who fought

« TYSON FURY

Tyson Fury fights about 100 pounds heavier than heavyweight predecessor Bob Fitzsimmons once did.

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Thomas Hauser, our primary book reviewer, is a prolific author himself. He has written 26 books about boxing. Of those, his favorites are two novels – "Mark Twain Remembers" and "Waiting for Carver Boyd" – and two non-fiction books – "The Black Lights" and "Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times." His favorite boxing books by other writers? Here you go:

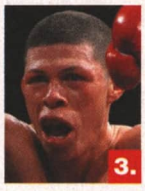


1. **"BEYOND GLORY"** By David Margolick
2. **"JOHN L. SULLIVAN AND HIS AMERICA"** By Michael T. Isenberg
3. **"ROCKY MARCIANO: THE ROCK OF HIS TIMES"** By Russell Sullivan
4. **"SWEET THUNDER: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SUGAR RAY ROBINSON"** By Wil Haygood
5. **"UNFORGIVABLE BLACKNESS: THE RISE AND FALL OF JACK JOHNSON"** By Geoffrey C. Ward
6. **"THE SWEET SCIENCE"** By A. J. Liebling
7. **"HEROES WITHOUT A COUNTRY"** By Donald McRae
8. **"THE LION AND THE EAGLE"** By Iain Manson
9. **"JACK DEMPSEY: THE MANASSA MAULER"** By Randy Roberts
10. **"THE LAST GREAT FIGHT"** By Joe Layden

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

1 **CHAD DAWSON** FORMER 175-POUND CHAMPION ★ 2 **TIM BRADLEY** WELTERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
3 **ROMAN "ROCKY" MARTINEZ** JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

FIGHTER	MUSIC	CAR	FOOD:	TATTOOS	ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	MOVIE	VIDEO GAME
1.	"Hip-hop."	"I drive a Mercedes, **Escalade** and a Jaguar."	"Cheeseburgers."	"I have about 18. They're mostly of family, pictures of my kids and wife."	"LeBron James."	"'**Training Day**.'"	"I play with the kids. I like the 'Call of Duty' games."
2.	"Hip-hop."	"My favorite car is a Maserati. If I could have any car, I'd probably say a **Cadillac Escalade**."	"I've got to say **Sushi**."	"I don't have any tattoos."	"I've got to say **Kobe Bryant**."	"My favorite movie is 'Coming to America.'"	"'Black Ops II.'"
 3.	"I like salsa and my favorite singers are Frankie Ruiz, Hector Lavoe and Ismael Rivera."	"I own a Toyota Corolla but a car that I like is the Range Rover."	"My favorite food is fish and seafood."	"I don't have any tattoos, I don't like it."	"My favorite athletes are Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen, and actually Angel Pagan."	"I like 'Shrek,' a movie I enjoy with my kids."	"I play 'Mario Bros,' 'Mortal Kombat' and 'Call of Duty.'"

— **Anson Wainwright**

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

By **Michael Rosenthal**

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

GOOD

Canelo Alvarez couldn't have been classier during the press tour to promote his superfight against Miguel Cotto on Nov. 21 in Las Vegas, never once disrespecting his elder opponent. That's how it should be. Alvarez made no bold predictions. "In what round are you going to knock him out?" one reporter asked. "I don't like to predict knockouts. I'll just prepare well for this fight and be ready for anything," Alvarez responded politely through a translator, deftly avoiding anything resembling trash talk. Another reporter asked what a victory would mean for his career. "(Cotto) is a great fighter," Alvarez said. "Being able to beat a great fighter like him would do wonders for my career. Yeah, if I beat him, it signifies a lot for my career." Alvarez's respect for Cotto seems genuine. I believe he really has a certain reverence for the future Hall of Famer. Alvarez's approach also is smart. One, Mexicans demand humility from their stars. And, two, if you build up your opponent (as opposed to tearing him down), you look that much better when you beat him.

BAD

I'm not going to be as critical of the Shane Mosley-Ricardo Mayorga fight as many others have been. I thought the fight was a mildly amusing melodrama, with Mayorga, the villain, resurrecting his trademark bravado before he was knocked out by a body shot in the sixth round. It was far from the best fight I've seen but it wasn't the worst. And I applaud Mosley for the energy and creativity with which he put the event together and promoted it. I didn't know he had that in him. The bad – or sad – part for me is that Mosley, one of my favorite people in boxing, felt it was necessary to do this. The event came off as a desperate attempt to remain relevant at 43, a last-ditch effort to make money while he can still throw punches. I can't blame him or anyone else for that but it was painful to see. I wish Mosley, a once-great boxer, would hang 'em up and move on the next phase of his life. If he insists upon continuing, though, I hope the Mayorga event leads to one last important fight against a legitimate opponent. And it appears Mosley intends to build on his first event and become a full-fledged promoter. If that's what this was all about, then it makes some sense.

WORSE

I think I saw Mikey Garcia's photo on a milk carton. It will be two years in January that the former two-division titleholder has been out of the ring, a one-sided decision over Juan Carlos Burgos being our last sighting of him. Garcia hasn't fought because of an ongoing dispute with his promoter, Top Rank, which he claims no longer has a valid contract tying him to the firm. The details of the dispute are complicated. The fallout isn't. Garcia (34-0, 28 knockouts) is one of the best, most exciting fighters in the world. And he's 27, at the peak of his abilities. He should be pounding elite opponents on international television, not merely staying in shape at his local gym in case something changes. This is tragic, at least in boxing terms. It's not easy coming back from a two-year layoff, even for a good fighter, and any momentum Garcia established before the layoff is history. That said, he can and presumably will come back. It can't happen soon enough. Too bad he'll never get those wasted two years back.

RING POLL

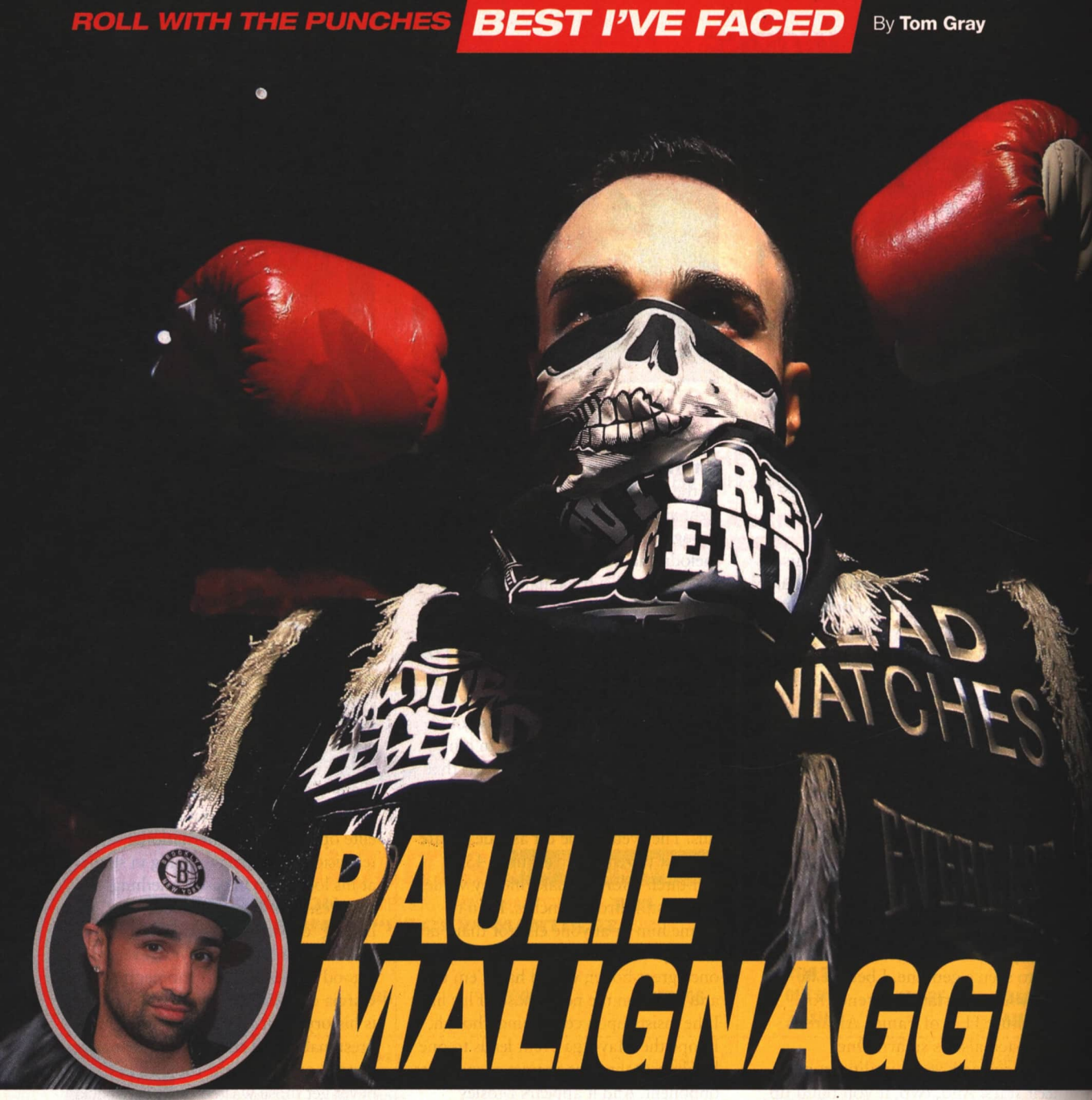
A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

The fans favor the younger man to win the superfight on Nov. 21 – but not by much. We asked: **What will be the result of the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez fight?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

30.55	ALVAREZ BY KNOCKOUT
23.11	ALVAREZ BY DECISION
22.56	COTTO BY KNOCKOUT
21.96	COTTO BY DECISION
1.82	DRAW

Note: 2,190 readers voted



PAULIE MALIGNAGGI

He is known as "The Magic Man" but the professional life of Paulie Malignaggi has been anything but an illusion. The charismatic Italian New Yorker annexed world titles at junior welterweight and welterweight and went out of his way to face some of the finest fighters of a generation.

Following 21 consecutive victories, Malignaggi earned his stripes in defeat to a peak version of Miguel Cotto in June 2006. Incorrectly labeled as a product of hype, he would endure a broken eye socket, a hostile crowd and a rampaging opponent to lose a competitive unanimous decision. The incredible bravery Malignaggi displayed that night has never been forgotten and his burning ambition only intensified.

He captured the IBF junior welterweight title from Lovemore Ndou the following year and, despite setbacks against the likes of Ricky Hatton and Amir Khan, clung to elite status like a man possessed.

An eventual move to welterweight would lead to a shot at WBA titleholder Vyacheslav Senchenko in the champ's home country of Ukraine and, against the odds, Malignaggi claimed his second championship via a ninth-round technical knockout in April 2012.

A split-decision loss to Adrien Broner, in his first defense, was followed by an eye-catching win over fellow Brooklynite Zab Judah, which turned out to be Malignaggi's final victory. This year, consecutive stoppage defeats to world-class opponents Shawn Porter and Danny Garcia have convinced him that the final curtain has fallen.

Paulie Malignaggi said Miguel Cotto was the best all-around fighter he faced.

Not so fast.

"I've decided to have a farewell fight in Italy," said Malignaggi, who will return to action on Sept. 26 in Milan. "The opponent is Laszlo Fazekas, who has 27 wins and 21 losses. He's a run-of-the-mill opponent but it's an opportunity for me to be seen live in my ancestral home, which is a priority.

"There have been rumors circulating that I would like to fight for the European title after this one but I haven't thought about my next step. I would be interested in competing for that belt but I need to see how I feel when I get back in the ring."

The affable Malignaggi, who is also an expert analyst with Showtime Boxing, agreed to speak to THE RING Magazine about the best he has faced in 10 key categories.

BEST JAB

Amir Khan: To be effective with the jab you must control range and when you get into position you rely on your hand speed. Amir had that down very well in our fight.

BEST DEFENSE

Adrien Broner: Adrien stays in the pocket so that he can roll and slip what's coming his way and, when he does catch a shot, it rarely lands flush. There is method to that Mayweather defense, although Floyd is a lot better at it. Both Gavin Rees and Marcos Maidana exploited Broner's vulnerability to the overhand right and that's because Adrien doesn't bend at the knees.

BEST CHIN

Lovemore Ndou: Lovemore was never stopped as a professional and had a great chin. I did drop him in our first fight but that was one of the sharpest performances of my career. I won my first world title from him and was really on my game that night.

BEST PUNCHER

Miguel Cotto: Miguel was a consistently hard puncher. The guy hit me and I was actually asking myself if it was real. He broke my orbital bone in Round 2 and that's damage you pick up in a car accident. Don't believe all the bulls--t about an injury like that going numb either. The pain never goes away and it's your adrenaline that carries you through.

FASTEST HANDS

Khan: When he found the range his hand speed never let him down. Amir could pull the trigger very quickly and in that sense he's like a gunslinger in the Old West. He was the fastest on the draw and very difficult to counterpunch. He also has a very deceiving rhythm, which makes it difficult to time him.

FASTEST FEET

Khan: Amir was the only guy who completely nullified my main asset, which is quickness. He took the lead in our fight and I couldn't fall back on my speed because his speed topped mine. Very early I could tell it was going to be tough and it obviously was. Amir will be a nightmare for any opponent because he uses fast feet to acquire the range and then releases fast hands when he gets there.

SMARTEST

Cotto: Miguel is so good at making you feel uncomfortable and making you fight his fight. He takes you completely out of your comfort zone and even when you're doing well against him, you still know you're in danger. He cut off the ring, maneuvered me into certain areas, made me overthink, and that's when panic sets in. He has excellent ring intelligence. You can't tell how good Miguel is until you're in there with him.

STRONGEST

Shawn Porter: He came from a higher weight and has a background in wrestling and football. Also he has the type of physique where he can excel in that body-to-body contact. It was very difficult to maneuver on the inside against him and locate the correct punching angles. Shawn was very strong and tenacious on the inside and he kept the action there as often as he could.

BEST OVERALL SKILLS

Cotto: Miguel's technical skill is excellent. If you see a still picture of him throwing a left hook, his right hand is always right by his chin. If he's throwing the right, his left hand is by his chin. He has terrific balance, keeps his hands very high and is always in good position.

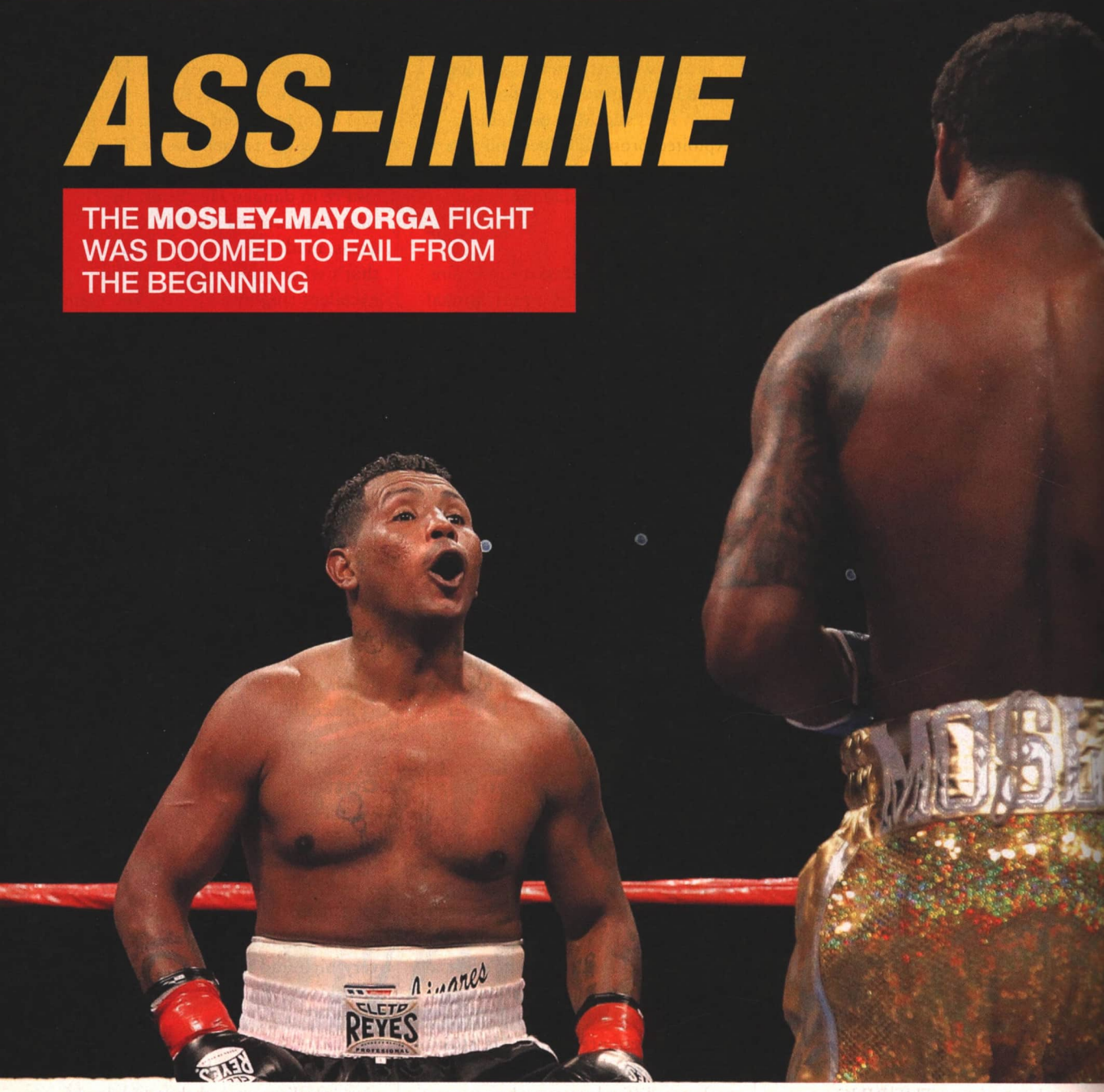
BEST OVERALL

Cotto: He had the power, the ring intelligence and the unique ability to know when I was hurting. Many times in my career I would catch a good shot to the head or to the body and play possum in order to kill the clock. The problem was Miguel always knew when I was hurt and would jump right on me. He had real killer instinct and that, combined with his power, technique and desire, makes him what he is. All these years later and I can say, 'Hey, that's the best fighter I ever fought.'"

By **David Greisman**

ASS-ININE

THE **MOSLEY-MAYORGA** FIGHT WAS DOOMED TO FAIL FROM THE BEGINNING



The rematch between Shane Mosley and Ricardo Mayorga was mocked from the moment it was announced. And deservedly so.

It continued to be embarrassing during the buildup to a sequel seemingly no one wanted to see seven years after Mosley stopped Mayorga in their first fight. And it proved to be pointless on fight night, with Mosley making relatively easy work of Mayorga en route to a sixth-round technical knockout.

This fight was marketed under the title of "Grudge Match," recalling the movie of the same title and a similar theme. But while the movie featured two old actors (Robert De Niro and Sylvester Stallone) who played the roles of boxers in the past, this so-called main event had two too-old boxers who were pretending they could still play a role in the sport.

Mosley hadn't fought since losing to Anthony Mundine in 2013. He was nearing 44 years old and hadn't beaten anyone of note since Antonio Margarito in the beginning of 2009. Mayorga was almost 42, had just come back in 2014 after 3 1/2 years away from boxing and an ill-fated attempt at mixed martial arts. His last notable win, if it could be called that, came against the flabby and finished Fernando Vargas in 2007.

There was also a courtroom circus, as Don King sued to try to prevent the fight from happening. If only he'd succeeded and done us all a favor. And there was a press conference stunt so shameful in

Ricardo Mayorga could still ham it up but doesn't have much left in the way of skills.

its shamelessness, with Mosley's girlfriend coincidentally bending over in perfect position for Mayorga to touch her rear end inappropriately. That led to a ruckus that was livelier than the action between the bells.

Mosley was financing the show, which wasn't expected to do well on pay-per-view opposite the free and compelling featherweight fight between Abner Mares and Leo Santa Cruz on ESPN.

The press conference stunt seemed to be a last-ditch effort to give the card a financial boost. Without a rear, Mosley would be in arrears. Still, anyone who bought Mosley-Mayorga II because of a butt grab only made an ass out of himself.

At least Mosley showed up in shape. That couldn't be said for Mayorga, who didn't come close to making weight and then added even more pounds before he stepped in the ring. He was slow, ineffective and there to do exactly what was expected of him — lose. Mosley barely got hit with anything. He targeted Mayorga with clean shots to the head, dug downstairs when Mayorga's chin held up and ended things with a body shot at the end of the sixth.

Mosley says that he doesn't need the money, that he returned out of pride and to make things right after the injuries and other circumstances that led to his losses, particularly the defeat against Mundine. But the only thing that kept this fight from being completely unnecessary is that Mosley had to face someone in order to return, even if it meant beating a shot fighter in order to get a shot at someone of substance.

Beyond that, the best that Mayorga could say was that he slapped a bum. And the best that Mosley can say is that he did the same.

★

At least Mosley was able to beat his old and out-of-shape opponent. The same can't be said of Steve Cunningham, who could do no better than a draw against Antonio Tarver.

That's right: Tarver, the former light heavyweight champion who resembled pretty much every 46-year-old former athlete that happens to be a good — or, rather, a bad — 10 years beyond and 40 pounds over his best days.

Cunningham, conversely, looks aesthetically phenomenal at 39. But these past few years have shown him to be a cruiserweight among heavyweights. It's unfair to compare most anyone to Evander Holyfield but Cunningham is no David Haye either. Nor is he even Tomasz Adamek.

Sure, Cunningham got robbed in his rematch with Adamek three years ago. And yes, Cunningham was able to put Tyson Fury down in 2013. But the truth of the matter is he's still 4-3-1 since moving into the division. And even if Cunningham were given the wins he feels he deserved against Adamek, Vyacheslav Glazkov and Tarver, that 7-1 record still wouldn't be overly impressive.

He was slightly ahead on the scorecards when Fury knocked him out, but Fury was able to put him down in part because Cunningham is too small to take big shots. That's why he was also on the canvas in victories over Amir Mansour and Natu Visinia. And it's why he didn't push the action at times against Tarver, giving the judges reason to favor what the older, fatter man was doing.

Smaller fighters moving up to heavyweight need the speed to elude their opponents and the power to get their respect and that of the ringside judges who may have an unconscious bias, believing that this lighter fighter is landing lighter blows.

There's no reason to believe Cunningham would trouble RING champion Wladimir Klitschko, titleholder Deontay Wilder or any of the many contenders and prospects listed below them.

He didn't lose to Tarver but he didn't win either. Nor did he win anyone over. Rather, his performance suggested that the next time he truly steps up could be the one time he truly goes down. Given the right opponent, or rather the wrong one, the fighter nicknamed "USS" Cunningham will somehow simultaneously be taken into deep waters while also being up a creek without a paddle.

By Thomas Hauser

TIMES CHANGE

Contributor Thomas Hauser has a new perspective on promoter Don King.

DON KING IS EASIER TO EMBRACE IN HIS GOLDEN YEARS

Don King once observed, "Boxing is life personified. You get knocked down; you get back up. You dust yourself off and you get back into the fray. Your problem stands right before you. You cannot procrastinate and put it off. You can't run away from it. You've got to be able to deal with it. And that's what we have in life."

On the night of March 9, 2013, at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, King and I were together in Tavoris Cloud's dressing room as Cloud readied to fight Bernard Hopkins and Don uttered a variation on that theme.

King and I have had our differences over the years. I've written harshly about him in the past and we've been on the opposing side in several legal proceedings. But I've always respected the extraordinary nature of his accomplishments. And like the rest of the world, I've been captivated by his persona.

Now, as Cloud hit the pads with trainer Abel Sanchez, King told me, "Boxing is like life. You knock each other down and then you hug each other. That's what you and me have done."

Fast-forward to July 25, 2015. I was having dinner with Don at one of his favorite haunts, Palm Too in midtown Manhattan. There were five of us at the table. One of the guests – an attractive blonde with a

winsome smile who was meeting King for the first time – asked what he thought about Donald Trump's entry into the Republican presidential race.

That led to an extraordinary performance. For the next 90 minutes, King lectured without intermission on the history of civilization. He began with Hammurabi (who reigned over the Babylonian empire from 1792 B.C. to 1750 B.C.). Then he segued to classical Greek civilization, the Roman Empire, the Crusades, the Renaissance, the American Revolution and myriad other historical landmarks. References to Robin Hood and numbers-running in Cleveland were thrown into the mix as the narrative worked its way to the present.

Two years ago, a reader wrote to me and defined Don King as follows: "He is the criminal who becomes a revolutionary, rises to power, becomes a fabulously wealthy third-world dictator, and, after he is overthrown, lives the rest of his life in financially comfortable exile but still longing to return to power."

King would take issue with some of that characterization. But it's clear that, in recent years, his age (Don is now 84), the decline of his empire and the death of people he loves have brought a vulnerability to him.

For many years, I wanted to like Don King but couldn't.

I like him now.

★

Recently, I was leafing through Joseph Heller's classic World War II novel, "Catch-22," and came across an interesting passage.

A character named Major Major asks bombardier John Yossarian why he won't fly any more missions and Yossarian answers, "I'm afraid."

"That's nothing to be ashamed of," Major Major counsels. "We're all afraid."

"I'm not ashamed," Yossarian answers. "I'm just afraid."

Those sentiments could be applied to boxing. All fighters feel fear. How they deal with it is one of the factors that spells the difference between winning and losing.

★

A word of praise for Harold Lederman.

Sometimes we take the good in our midst for granted. So let's recognize the fact that boxing has a treasure in Harold. He loves going to the fights. He loves talking with people about boxing. His knowledge of the sweet science is encyclopedic.

HBO is the ideal platform for Harold. His role as the network's "unofficial ringside judge" gives him a ring's-edge view of the action.

"I'm going to slip the usher 10 dollars to see if I can get a better seat," Harold joked before one night's work.

And his commentating gig allows him to talk to millions of fans at once instead of one fan at a time.

Harold Lederman at the fights is a happy man. And his happiness is contagious.

★

I've often said that the primary reasons for boxing's decline in popularity among mainstream sports fans are, one, there are so many phony belts that the sweet science no longer has recognizable champions; and, two, the sport has an economic model that minimizes viewership of its flagship events.

But there's a third reason: The best no longer fight the best. Too many elite fighters avoid challenges because they're afraid of losing.

Here, the thoughts of manager Cameron Dunkin are instructive.

"They've just ruined the business with this no-loss policy," Dunkin said. "Back in the old days, guys defended their titles 15 times in one year, twice in one month, and they lost fights. I'll never forget ... Shane Mosley, who was a great, great fighter, year after year winning and winning and winning, beating everyone. Then all of a sudden he loses to Vernon Forrest. My phone lit up. People saying, 'See, I told you he can't fight; I told you he was nothing.' And when Roy Jones lost, everybody was, 'See, I always knew he wasn't that good.' What is wrong with people? Baseball, you hit the ball three times out of ten, you're an All-Star. Golf, people lose. Tennis, people lose. Stock car racing, people lose. It happens."

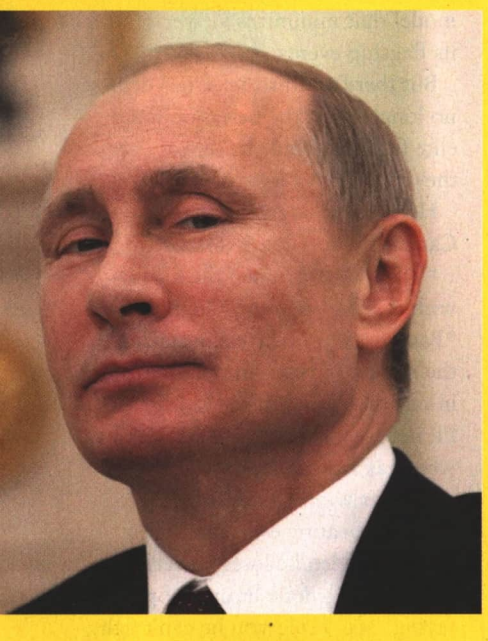
And to that ESPN commentator Teddy Atlas has added a word about former amateur standouts who opt for a long string of mismatches after turning pro.

"It's kind of like they go to a great university like Harvard," Atlas said. "Then they get out of Harvard and go to kindergarten and start playing with crayons. Throw the crayons away, please. Go forward now."

★

Note to the world sanctioning organizations: Terry Malloy (the character made famous in Budd Schulberg's "On the Waterfront") said, "I coulda been a contender." He did not say, "I coulda fought for an interim title." RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "Thomas Hauser on Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press.



Meet Roy Jones Jr.'s new pal: Vladimir Putin.

TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Fun fact: Pensacola, Florida, is the sister city of Horlivka, which is in eastern Ukraine about 100 miles from the Russian border. Horlivka is currently a Battlezone Royale for the pro-West and pro-Russia forces that have been shredding Ukraine for the past two years.

With this as the backdrop, **Roy Jones Jr.**, citizen of Pensacola, met with **Vladimir Putin**, president of Russia, on Aug. 20 in Crimea, a Ukrainian region annexed by Russia in 2014 under worldwide protest. After some customary talk about judo, Jones asked Putin if he could have a Russian passport. Putin said sure.

In interviews Jones discussed plans to get a place in Moscow, make music and work as a broadcaster. And fight, of course, though promoter **Vlad Hrunov** said once the papers go through the 46-year-old former champion wouldn't be facing his Russian countrymen.

Jones was reportedly placed on an "enemy of the state" list in Ukraine for his audience with Putin. The fighter took this as an opportunity to bizarrely suggest that the Ukrainian Klitschko brothers were "itching to fight" him and that maybe this was "their way of calling me out." He went on to label the blacklisting a "transparent attempt to politicize a legitimate business endeavor" and insisted his intentions were from the heart.

"All the people here seem to love Roy Jones Jr.," he told Putin, "and I love when people love me." He added that the arrangement could help "build a bridge" between his soon-to-be dual homelands. In a video of the meeting you could tell that Jones, whose career in the U.S. has collapsed in Berlin Wall-like fashion, was genuinely excited.

Putin, characteristically languid to the point where a compliment and a warning become indistinguishable, said, "I hope you will succeed in business here in Russia."

Former heavyweight title challenger **Manuel Charr** was shot multiple times in the abdomen by an unknown attacker Sept. 1 in Essen, Germany. He was allegedly waiting outside a kebab shop for someone who had been taunting him on Facebook. Charr was taken in for surgery and a few days later posted a video from his hospital bed telling fans he was doing OK.

Former light heavyweight contender **Chris Henry** was not as lucky. The 34-year-old was shot and killed in Houston on Aug. 15 after an argument with a person who was still at large when this issue of the magazine went to press. Henry nearly broke through onto the big stage but in 2008 lost a decision to **Adrian Diaconu** in Romania and another to **Yusaf Mack** in Maryland the following year.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. offered his list of the Top 5 fighters of all time during a broadcast on ESPN Deportes in August: 1. **Mayweather** (no surprise there), 2. **Roberto Duran**, 3. **Pernell Whitaker**, 4. **Julio Cesar Chavez**, 5. **Muhammad Ali**. Mayweather described Ali as more of a civil rights leader than a fighter, pointed out his losses to **Leon Spinks** and **Ken Norton** (Mayweather believes Ali lost all three of his meetings with Norton) and emphasized that Ali was never anything but a heavyweight. "This is me just being honest," said Mayweather.

Former two-weight titleholder **Juan Manuel Lopez** put the WBO featherweight title belt he won in 2010 against **Steve Luevano** on eBay but said it's not because he needs money. He simply said a British collector approached him with the idea and he took the opportunity. As of press time the belt was being offered in a private sale for $9,995 along with his 122-pound WBO Latino title for $5,500. The condition for each was listed as "used."

Evander Holyfield's son **Elijah**, a highly touted running back who was profiled in a recent story on RingTV.com, officially committed to the University of Georgia in early September. Meanwhile, the late **Tommy Morrison**'s son, **Trey Lippe-Morrison**, a heavyweight prospect with a perfect 9-0 (9 KOs) record, announced he would begin training with **Freddie Roach**.

And **Conor McGregor** became the latest MMA fighter to suggest he could beat Mayweather. The 27-year-old Irishman, who will fight **Jose Aldo** for the undisputed UFC featherweight (136-145 pounds) championship in December, said a pay-per-view event would rival Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao in revenue, generating "half a billion." Just to further stoke the growing cross-discipline rivalry, McGregor added that **Ronda Rousey**, who in late August was sparring with Floyd over their respective earning-powers, "would dismantle (Mayweather) in seconds."

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BEST VS. BEST

BOXING IS HEALTHY BECAUSE FIGHTERS ARE TAKING MORE RISKS WHEN CHOOSING THEIR OPPONENTS

Bernard Hopkins (pictured with Miguel Cotto) says it's simple: Give the fans what they want.

Editor's note: THE RING has changed directions with Bernard Hopkins' column. Going forward, in "RING IQ," the future Hall of Famer will give his thoughts – through contributor Joseph Santoliquito – on various subjects important to every boxer and fan. That includes ring tactics, conduct outside the ropes and other elements of the sport on which Hopkins speaks with authority. This month: the best fighting the best.

I think ... no, I know that boxing right now is in a better state than it was three or four years ago. That has a lot to do with the talent out there and how things have shifted, with promoters, managers and the other businesspeople in the sport now realizing that fighters must face legitimate opponents to make the sport legit.

The fans have demanded it for years, whether it's through pay-per-view numbers or the networks that are showing boxing.

The fans wanted to see Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao fight and they got it this year. The fans wanted to see Canelo Alvarez fight Miguel Cotto, Gennady

Golovkin face a tough opponent like David Lemieux and Wladimir Klitschko take on someone like Tyson Fury, who is capable of knocking him out.

Before the end of the year, all three of those fights will have taken place. The fans are getting what they want.

People outside the sport like to say boxing is battling uphill to find success. I think the sport is ascending uphill, not battling. More fights are on TV than there have been in 20 years.

What's happened now in boxing is this: Either you step up or get out of the business. All it takes is poor numbers, poor attendance to make you irrelevant. Fans are tired of eating third-level food. They want top quality, Grade-A stuff. They deserve it.

And that's what we need to continue to give them.

Listen, I know that we're in competition among ourselves as promoters. Competition brings out the best in people, I think. At the end of the day, competition – healthy competition among promoters – can bring boxing to where it once was back in the 1980s and early 1990s.

We're not there yet but we're in a better position than we were a few years ago. This is the first year in a long time we got the matchups fans wanted. And because of that, we're getting hundreds of fans showing up at press conferences.

If the sport were dead, as a lot of people outside the sport have been ignorantly saying for decades, why are we getting hundreds of fans at these press conferences? Why did Mayweather-Pacquiao break all pay-per-view records?

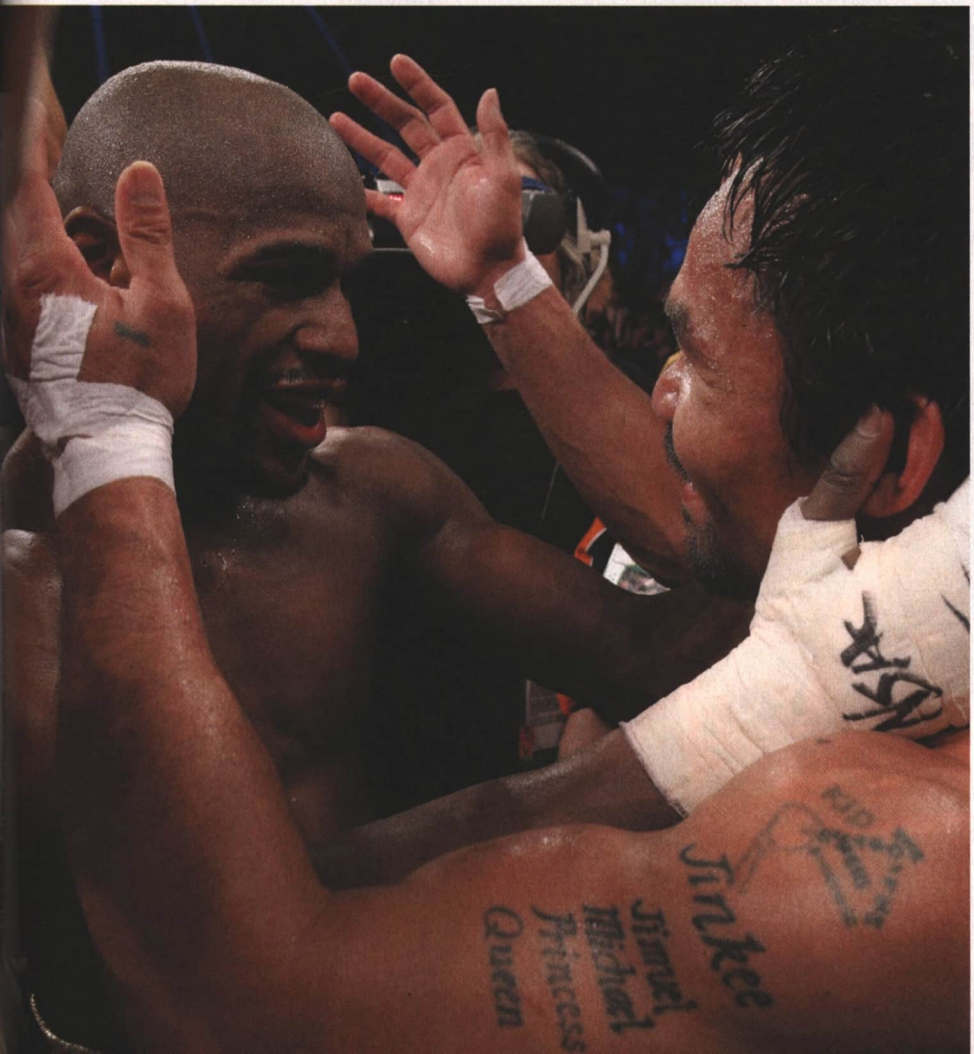
We made fights that mattered.

Now we close the year really strong in November with Cotto-Alvarez and that will spin off into 2016. The winner of Cotto-Alvarez will get the Golovkin-Lemieux winner, maybe sometime in March or April. I have to give the WBC credit for the bold move of mandating that fight. Think about that.

Some people are going to remember 2015 for Pacquiao's shoulder and his disappointing fight against Mayweather. I want to go on record as saying we won't see Mayweather fight again after this year. He will want so much money to fight in 2016 and no one will want to see it or pay for it, unless it's against one of the young guns. And that '0' in Floyd's record means everything to him. He'd never sleep again if he lost.

That will open the door for Terence Crawford, Keith Thurman, Alvarez and the other young superstars coming up because of their talent and the right attitude. You're not hearing guys say their promoters and managers will decide who they fight as much. Now they're emulating such greats of the past as Ray Robinson and Muhammad Ali, who fought everyone.

Fans are smart enough today to know what quality is. These guys today are willing to take chances. It's why the game is in good shape and will get better. RING



The fans finally saw Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao this year.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

LEO SANTA CRUZ

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Leo Santa Cruz silenced doubters with a convincing decision victory over Abner Mares.

Good fighters often receive a golden opportunity to clearly demonstrate they're a cut above the rest.

Leo Santa Cruz's chance came against Abner Mares on Aug. 29 in Los Angeles, where the hometown fans of both fighters packed Staples Center in an electrically charged title matchup on ESPN.

Win and you become something akin to a star; lose and go back to the drawing board. Meet Leo Santa Cruz: star.

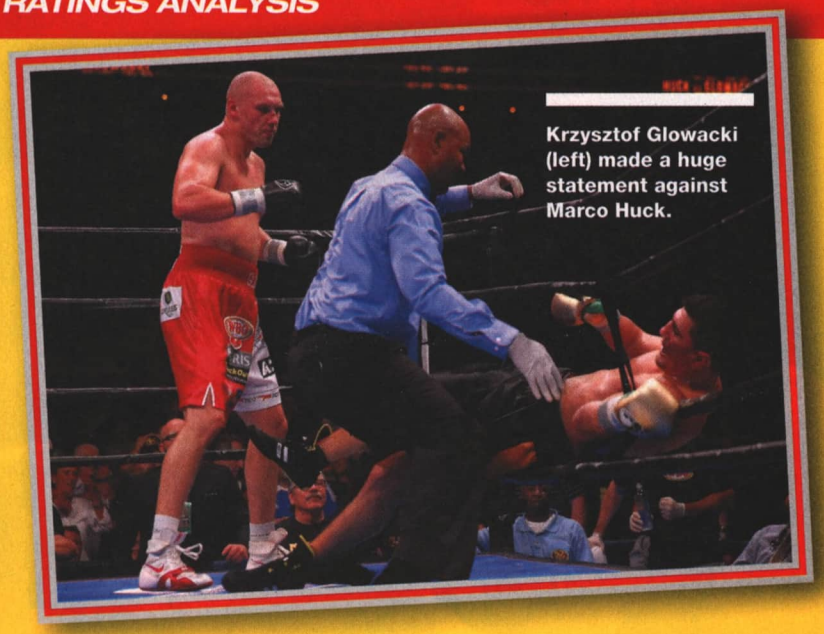
Santa Cruz outboxed and outslugged the best, most accomplished opponent he has faced in his career to win a majority, yet convincing decision and claim a major world title in a third weight division.

More important, he answered any and all questions about whether he belongs among the truly elite fighters, the ones who command attention and big paydays. He obviously does. His combination of skills, volume punching and resilience makes him a special talent.

No more questions about who Santa Cruz has or hasn't fought. No more comments like, "He hasn't proven anything."

Mares stumbled in 2013 against Jhonny Gonzalez, who stopped the former three-division titleholder in the first round and has had mixed results since. Still, the experts rightfully viewed him with respect going into what was seen as a 50-50 fight. Mares is formidable.

Of course, we don't know how Santa Cruz will fare going forward. We only know that he took a very big step on Aug. 29. RING



Krzysztof Glowacki (left) made a huge statement against Marco Huck.

POUND FOR POUND: No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Krzysztof Glowacki announced himself in a big way with a comeback 11th-round knockout of No. 1-rated titleholder Marco Huck. The previously unrated Pole entered at No. 3 and pushed Huck to No. 4 while Grigory Drozd (No. 2 last month) became the new No. 1, Denis Lebedev rose from No. 3 to No. 2 and Thabiso Mchunu (No. 10 last month) fell off the list.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Danny Garcia (140-pound champion last month) officially rose to welterweight and took out Paulie Malignaggi (unrated) in nine rounds. "Swift" replaced Brad Solomon at No. 10.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: With Garcia's move to welterweight, the championship was vacated.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Jhonny Gonzalez (No. 6 last month) exited the list to fight at junior lightweight so everyone previously below him moved up and Satoshi Hosono of Japan took the No. 10 spot. Four weeks later Leo Santa Cruz (No. 2 junior featherweight last month) took the No. 4 spot from Abner Mares (who fell to No. 6), whom he beat by majority decision in a heated Los Angeles turf war. Hosono was nudged off the list and those who had gained a rank after Gonzalez's departure fell back to their original places.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Julio Ceja got up from an early knockdown and rallied to stop fellow Mexican Hugo Ruiz (No. 10 last month) in Round 5 on the Santa Cruz-Mares undercard. Ruiz dropped off the list, Ceja came in at No. 9 and the extra vacancy created by Santa Cruz's departure was filled by undefeated Californian Manuel Avila at No. 10.

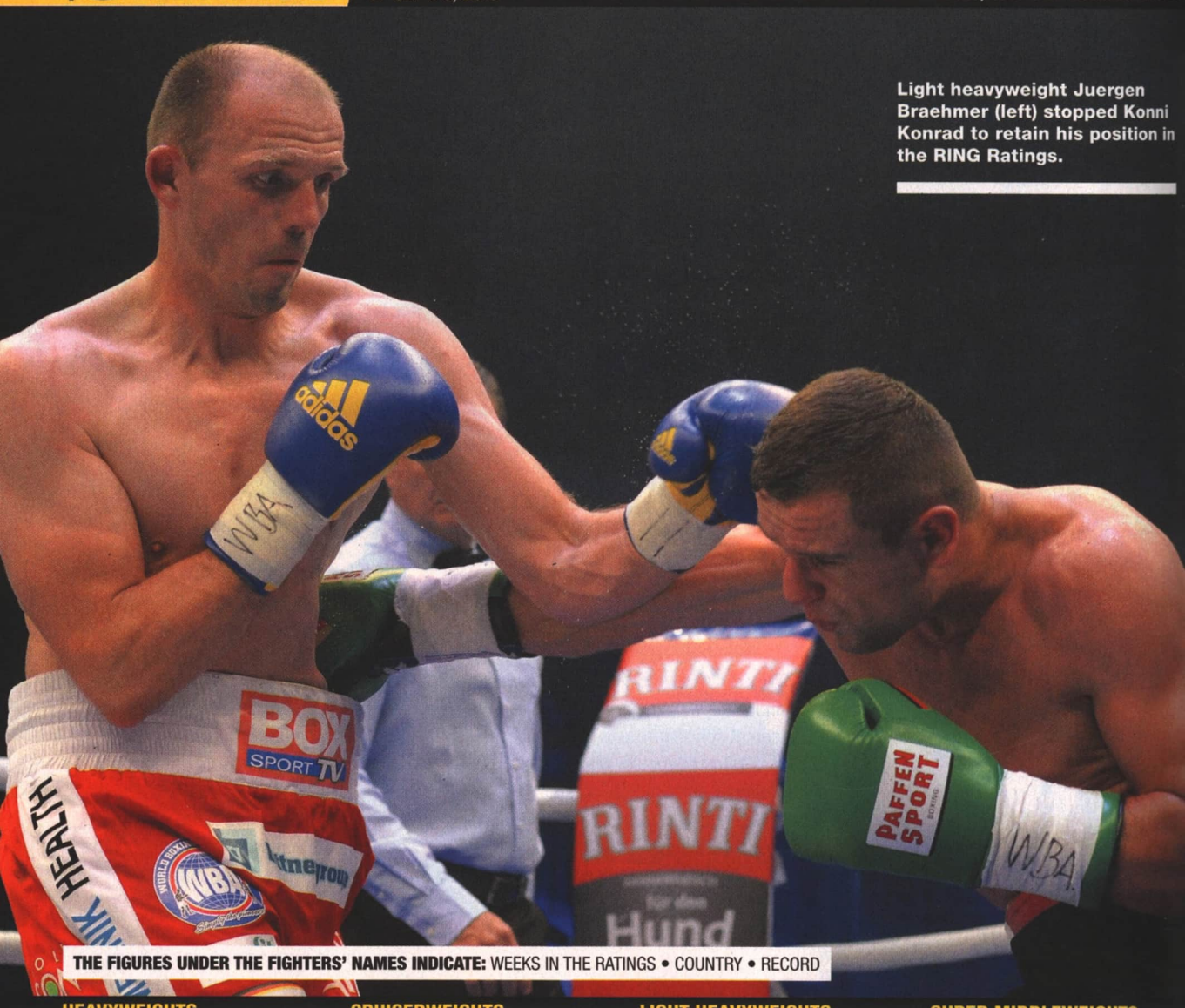
BANTAMWEIGHTS: Jamie McDonnell (No. 5 last month) again won by unanimous decision in a rematch with Tomoki Kameda (No. 6 last month), though some watching didn't agree with the judges. McDonnell gained a notch and Kameda lost one, putting them at Nos. 4 and 7, respectively.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.



Light heavyweight Juergen Braehmer (left) stopped Konni Konrad to retain his position in the RING Ratings.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
538 • Ukraine • 64-3-0 (53 KOs)

1. ALEXANDER POVETKIN
412 • Russia • 29-1-0 (21 KOs)

2. DEONTAY WILDER
96 • U.S. • 34-0-0 (33 KOs)

3. TYSON FURY
186 • U.K. • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)

4. KUBRAT PULEV
204 • Bulgaria • 20-1-0 (11 KOs)

5. BRYANT JENNINGS
77 • U.S. • 19-1-0 (10 KOs)

6. BERMANE STIVERNE
126 • Canada • 24-2-1 (21 KOs)

7. VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV
78 • Ukraine • 21-0-1 (13 KOs)

8. RUSLAN CHAGAEV
44 • Uzbek. • 34-2-1 (21 KOs)

9. TONY THOMPSON
26 • U.S. • 40-5-0 (27 KOs)

10. CARLOS TAKAM
16 • Cameroon • 32-2-1 (25 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
206 • Cuba • 29-1-0 (14 KOs)

1. GRIGORY DROZD
101 • Russia • 40-1-0 (28 KOs)

2. DENIS LEBEDEV
293 • Russia • 27-2-0 (20 KOs)

3. KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI
4 • Poland • 25-0-0 (16 KOs)

4. MARCO HUCK
142 • Germany • 38-3-1 (26 KOs)

5. KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
535 • Poland • 49-3-1 (35 KOs)

6. ILUNGA MAKABU
113 • Congo • 19-1-0 (18 KOs)

7. FIRAT ARSLAN
149 • Germany • 35-8-2 (21 KOs)

8. VICTOR RAMIREZ
22 • Argentina • 22-2-0 (17 KOs)

9. YOURI KALENGA
64 • Congo • 21-2-0 (14 KOs)

10. DMITRY KUDRYASHOV
22 • Russia • 18-0-0 (18 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C ADONIS STEVENSON
118 • Canada • 26-1-0 (21 KOs)

1. SERGEY KOVALEV
138 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)

2. BERNARD HOPKINS
484 • U.S. • 55-7-2 (32 KOs)

3. JEAN PASCAL
113 • Canada • 30-3-1 (17 KOs)

4. JUERGEN BRAEHMER
167 • Germany • 47-2-0 (35 KOs)

5. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
78 • Colombia • 18-0-0 (10 KOs)

6. ISAAC CHILEMBA
176 • Malawi • 24-2-2 (10 KOs)

7. ARTUR BETERBIEV
39 • Russia • 9-0-0 (9 KOs)

8. ANDRZEJ FONFARA
69 • Poland • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

9. YUNIESKI GONZALEZ
7 • Cuba • 16-1-0 (12 KOs)

10. THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN
23 • S. Africa • 25-0-2 (14 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ARTHUR ABRAHAM
309 • Armenia • 43-4-0 (29 KOs)

2. JAMES DEGALE
118 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (14 KOs)

3. GEORGE GROVES
196 • U.K. • 21-2-0 (16 KOs)

4. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
61 • Mexico • 32-0-0 (24 KOs)

5. ANDRE DIRRELL
54 • U.S. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)

6. BADOU JACK
20 • Sweden • 19-1-1 (12 KOs)

7. ANTHONY DIRRELL
56 • U.S. • 28-1-1 (22 KOs)

8. ROBERT STIEGLITZ
317 • Russia • 47-5-1 (27 KOs)

9. FEDOR CHUDINOV
18 • Russia • 13-0-0 (10 KOs)

10. CALLUM SMITH
14 • U.K. • 16-0-0 (12 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C MIGUEL COTTO
66 • P.R. • 40-4-0 (33 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
196 • Kaz. • 33-0-0 (30 KOs)

2. ANDY LEE
39 • Ireland • 34-2-1 (24 KOs)

3. PETER QUILLIN
171 • U.S. • 31-0-1 (22 KOs)

4. DAVID LEMIEUX
15 • Canada • 34-2-0 (31 KOs)

5. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
41 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (11 KOs)

6. DANIEL JACOBS
39 • U.S. • 30-1-0 (27 KOs)

7. HASSAN N'DAM
86 • Cameroon • 31-2-0 (18 KOs)

8. DANIEL GEALE
326 • Australia • 31-4-0 (16 KOs)

9. CHRIS EUBANK JR.
22 • U.K. • 19-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. MICHEL SORO
11 • France • 27-1-1 (17 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. CANELO ALVAREZ
252 • Mexico • 45-1-1 (32 KOs)

2. ERISLANDY LARA
219 • Cuba • 21-2-2 (12 KOs)

3. AUSTIN TROUT
171 • U.S. • 29-2-0 (16 KOs)

4. JERMELL CHARLO
96 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. VANES MARTIROSYAN
301 • U.S. • 35-2-1 (21 KOs)

6. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE
48 • U.S. • 34-5-0 (19 KOs)

7. JERMALL CHARLO
65 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (16 KOs)

8. JULIAN WILLIAMS
39 • U.S. • 20-0-1 (12 KOs)

9. CARLOS MOLINA
219 • Mexico • 22-6-2 (6 KOs)

10. WILLIE NELSON
7 • U.S. • 24-2-1 (14 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
208 • U.S. • 48-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. KELL BROOK
229 • U.K. • 35-0-0 (24 KOs)

2. MANNY PACQUIAO
205 • Phil. • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)

3. AMIR KHAN
71 • U.K. • 31-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. TIM BRADLEY
170 • U.S. • 32-1-1 (12 KOs)

5. KEITH THURMAN
131 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (22 KOs)

6. SHAWN PORTER
92 • U.S. • 26-1-1 (16 KOs)

7. MARCOS MAIDANA
91 • Argentina • 35-5-0 (31 KOs)

8. DIEGO CHAVES
39 • Argentina • 23-2-1 (19 KOs)

9. SADAM ALI
17 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)

10. DANNY GARCIA
6 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (18 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
231 • Argentina • 37-3-0 (34 KOs)

2. LAMONT PETERSON
133 • U.S. • 33-3-1 (17 KOs)

3. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV
144 • Russia • 24-4-0 (17 KOs)

4. TERENCE CRAWFORD
21 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (18 KOs)

5. ADRIEN BRONER
71 • U.S. • 30-2-0 (22 KOs)

6. JESSIE VARGAS
74 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (9 KOs)

7. VIKTOR POSTOL
108 • Ukraine • 27-0-0 (11 KOs)

8. MAURICIO HERRERA
33 • U.S. • 22-5-0 (7 KOs)

9. AMIR IMAM
17 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (15 KOs)

10. JOSE BENAVIDEZ
22 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (16 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. RICHAR ABRIL
51 • Cuba • 19-3-1 (8 KOs)

2. JORGE LINARES
79 • Venezuela • 39-3-0 (26 KOs)

3. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
266 • Mexico • 35-4-0 (13 KOs)

4. SHARIF BOGERE
45 • Uganda • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)

5. MICKEY BEY
52 • U.S. • 21-1-1 (10 KOs)

6. DEJAN ZLATICANIN
22 • Montenegro • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

7. DIERRY JEAN
41 • Canada • 29-1-0 (20 KOs)

8. KEVIN MITCHELL
32 • U.K. • 39-3-0 (29 KOs)

9. DENIS SHAFIKOV
22 • Russia • 36-1-1 (19 KOs)

10. RICHARD COMMEY
15 • Ghana • 22-0-0 (20 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
297 • Japan • 23-0-1 (19 KOs)

2. TAKASHI MIURA
127 • Japan • 29-2-2 (22 KOs)

3. ROMAN MARTINEZ
366 • P.R. • 29-2-2 (17 KOs)

4. FRANCISCO VARGAS
61 • Mexico • 22-0-1 (16 KOs)

5. JAVIER FORTUNA
45 • Dom. Rep. • 28-0-1 (20 KOs)

6. JOSE PEDRAZA
34 • P.R. • 20-0-0 (12 KOs)

7. BRYAN VASQUEZ
39 • Costa Rica • 34-2-0 (18 KOs)

8. ORLANDO SALIDO
51 • Mexico • 42-13 -2 (29 KOs)

9. ROMAIN JACOB
18 • France • 23-0-0 (7 KOs)

10. RIKKI NAITO
17 • Japan • 13-0-0 (5 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NICHOLAS WALTERS
144 • Jamaica • 26-0-0 (21 KOs)

2. VASYL LOMACHENKO
71 • Ukraine • 4-1-0 (2 KO)

3. GARY RUSSELL JR.
24 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (15 KOs)

4. LEO SANTA CRUZ
2 • U.S. • 31-0-1 (17 KOs)

5. LEE SELBY
78 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (8 KOs)

6. ABNER MARES
123 • Mexico • 29-2-1 (15 KOs)

7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
92 • S. Africa • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

8. EVGENY GRADOVICH
132 • Russia • 19-1-1 (9 KOs)

9. JESUS CUELLAR
48 • Argentina • 27-1-0 (21 KOs)

10. JAYSON VELEZ
41 • P.R. • 23-0-1 (16 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
253 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

1. SCOTT QUIGG
146 • U.K. • 31-0-2 (23 KOs)

2. CARL FRAMPTON
155 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

3. NONITO DONAIRE
24 • Phil. • 35-3-0 (23 KOs)

4. GENESIS SERVANIA
78 • Phil. • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. SHINGO WAKE
42 • Japan • 19-4-2 (11 KOs)

6. REY VARGAS
39 • Mexico • 24-0-0 (20 KOs)

7. ALBERT PAGARA
36 • Phil. • 23-0-0 (16 KOs)

8. JESSIE MAGDALENO
13 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (15 KOs)

9. JULIO CEJA
2 • Mexico • 30-1-0 (27 KOs)

10. MANUEL AVILA
2 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (8 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING'S Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his champion weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-10 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
201 • Japan • 23-0-2 (17 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS PAYANO**
50 • Dom. Rep. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **ANSELMO MORENO**
389 • Panama • 35-3-1 (12 KOs)
4. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
121 • U.K. • 27-2-1 (12 KOs)
5. **KOKI KAMEDA**
247 • Japan • 33-1-0 (18 KOs)
6. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
242 • Phil. • 35-3-3 (20 KOs)
7. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
110 • Japan • 31-2-0 (19 KOs)
8. **RANDY CABALLERO**
46 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
9. **LEE HASKINS**
13 • U.K. • 32-3-0 (14 KOs)
10. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
8 • Thailand • 44-6-1 (22 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **NAOYA INOUE**
36 • Japan • 8-0-0 (7 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
174 • Mexico • 33-0-1 (26 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
123 • Thailand • 36-4-1 (33 KOs)
4. **ZOLANI TETE**
93 • S. Africa • 21-3-0 (18 KOs)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
279 • Argentina • 43-2-2 (23 KOs)
6. **MCJOE ARROYO**
65 • P.R. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
7. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
154 • Thailand • 56-1-1 (21 KOs)
8. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
120 • Mexico • 31-3-0 (25 KOs)
9. **DAVID SANCHEZ**
30 • Mexico • 28-2-2 (22 KOs)
10. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
125 • Phil. • 27-1-0 (14 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C ROMAN GONZALEZ
96 • Nicaragua • 43-0-0 (37 KOs)

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
127 • Mexico • 32-2-0 (23 KOs)
2. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
70 • Thailand • 16-0-0 (5 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
218 • U.S. • 36-4-0 (22 KOs)
4. **KAZUTO IOKA**
51 • Japan • 17-1-0 (10 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
206 • Argentina • 35-2-0 (19 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
78 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **EDGAR SOSA**
174 • Mexico • 51-9-0 (30 KOs)
8. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
97 • Mexico • 32-4-1 (28 KOs)
9. **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
53 • P.R. • 16-2-0 (14 KOs)
10. **NAWAPHON POR CHOKCHAI**
11 • Thailand • 29-0-0 (22 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C DONNIE NIETES
205 • Phil. • 36-1-4 (21 KOs)

1. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
128 • Mexico • 26-1-1 (17 KOs)
2. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
39 • Japan • 22-2-1 (9 KOs)
3. **JAVIER MENDOZA**
22 • Mexico • 24-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
70 • Phil. • 23-1-1 (18 KOs)
5. **RAUL GARCIA**
36 • Mexico • 37-3-1 (22 KOs)
6. **MILAN MELINDO**
43 • Phil. • 32-2-0 (12 KOs)
7. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
124 • Peru • 34-9-0 (13 KOs)
8. **REY LORETO**
22 • Phil. • 20-13-0 (12 KOs)
9. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ**
15 • Mexico • 17-3-1 (11 KOs)
10. **JONATHAN TACONING**
7 • Phil. • 21-2-1 (18 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
155 • S. Africa • 28-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
128 • Japan • 29-7-0 (11 KOs)
3. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
221 • Thailand • 38-0-0 (13 KOs)
4. **KOSEI TANAKA**
45 • Japan • 5-0-0 (2 KOs)
5. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART**
49 • Thailand • 11-0-0 (6 KOs)
6. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
152 • Nicaragua • 28-1-1 (16 KOs)
7. **RYUJI HARA**
106 • Japan • 19-1-0 (11 KOs)
8. **XIONG ZHAO ZHONG**
43 • China • 25-6-1 (14 KOs)
9. **DENVER CUELLO**
43 • Phil. • 36-5-6 (24 KOs)
10. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
7 • Mexico • 31-6-0 (22 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
208 • U.S. • 48-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
66 • Nicaragua • 43-0-0 (37 KOs)
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
266 • Ukraine • 64-3-0 (53 KOs)
4. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
30 • Kaz. • 33-0-0 (30 KOs)
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
107 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
6. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
615 • Phil. • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)
7. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
26 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)
8. **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
19 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (18 KOs)
9. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
16 • Japan • 23-0-2 (17 KOs)
10. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
14 • Japan • 23-0-1 (19 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

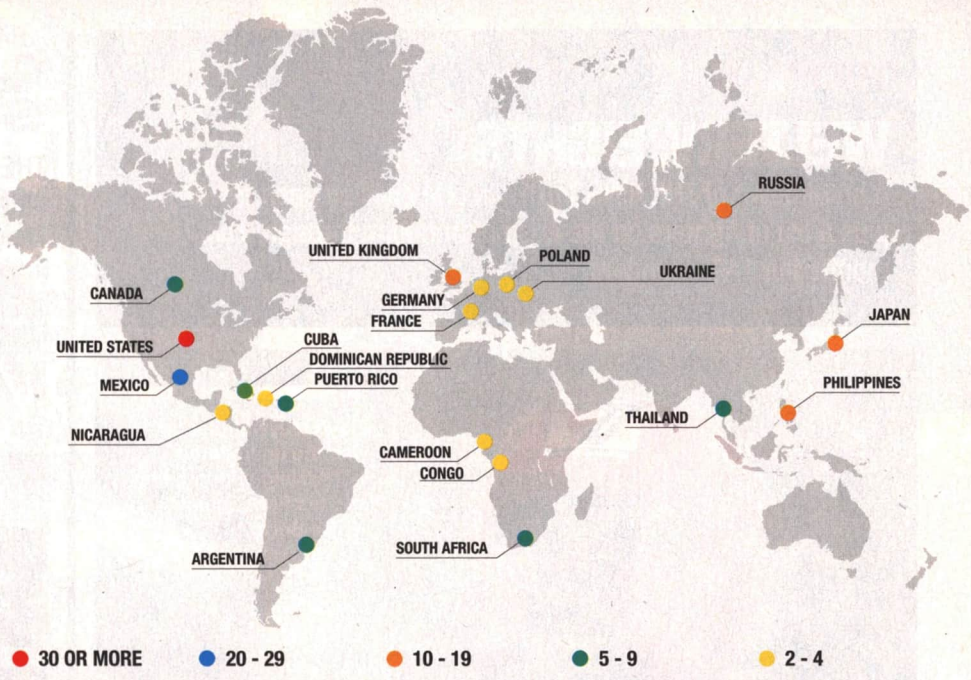
A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	35	
MEXICO	20	▼1
UNITED KINGDOM	14	
JAPAN	13	
PHILIPPINES	12	
RUSSIA	11	
ARGENTINA	7	
THAILAND	7	
PUERTO RICO	6	
CANADA	5	
CUBA	5	
SOUTH AFRICA	5	▼1
UKRAINE	4	
GERMANY	3	
POLAND	2	▲1
CAMEROON	2	
CONGO	2	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
FRANCE	2	
NICARAGUA	2	
ARMENIA	1	
AUSTRALIA	1	
BULGARIA	1	
CHINA	1	
COLOMBIA	1	
COSTA RICA	1	
GHANA	1	
IRELAND	1	
JAMAICA	1	
KAZAKHSTAN	1	
MALAWI	1	
MONTENEGRO	1	
PANAMA	1	
PERU	1	
SWEDEN	1	
UGANDA	1	
UZBEKISTAN	1	
VENEZUELA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *none.*

Countries in: *none.*



ENGLISH VS. SPANISH

The Americas have strong representation in THE RING Ratings, as the U.S. and Mexico remain Nos. 1 and 2 in the number of rated fighters. How do the American nations – English speaking vs. Spanish speaking – stack up against one another? Here's a look at the numbers:

DIVISION	ENGLISH	SPANISH
HEAVYWEIGHTS	4	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	0	2
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	3	2
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	2	1
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	1
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	7	3
WELTERWEIGHTS	6	2
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	7	1
LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	3
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	6
FEATHERWEIGHTS	3	3
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	3
BANTAMWEIGHTS	1	2
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	5
FLYWEIGHTS	1	6
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	5
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	2
TOTAL	41	47

Note: *This is how the nations break down by language. English: U.S., Canada and Jamaica. Spanish: Mexico, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.*

OPPORTUNITIES

Everyone preaches that the best should fight the best. Well, THE RING champions have an opportunity. The eight champs have faced opponents currently rated in their divisions only 16 times combined. And six of those fights involved one boxer, Wladimir Klitschko. That means the champions have many elite fighters to choose from when seeking opponents. We'll see how that goes. Here's a look at champions' records against those rated in their divisions:

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
HEAVYWEIGHT:
6-0 (4 KOs)

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. »
WELTERWEIGHT:
3-0 (0 KOs)

ROMAN GONZALEZ
FLYWEIGHT: 2-0 (1 KO)

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
CRUISERWEIGHT: 1-0 (0 KOs)

ADONIS STEVENSON
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: 1-0 (0 KOs)

MIGUEL COTTO
MIDDLEWEIGHT: 1-0 (1 KO)

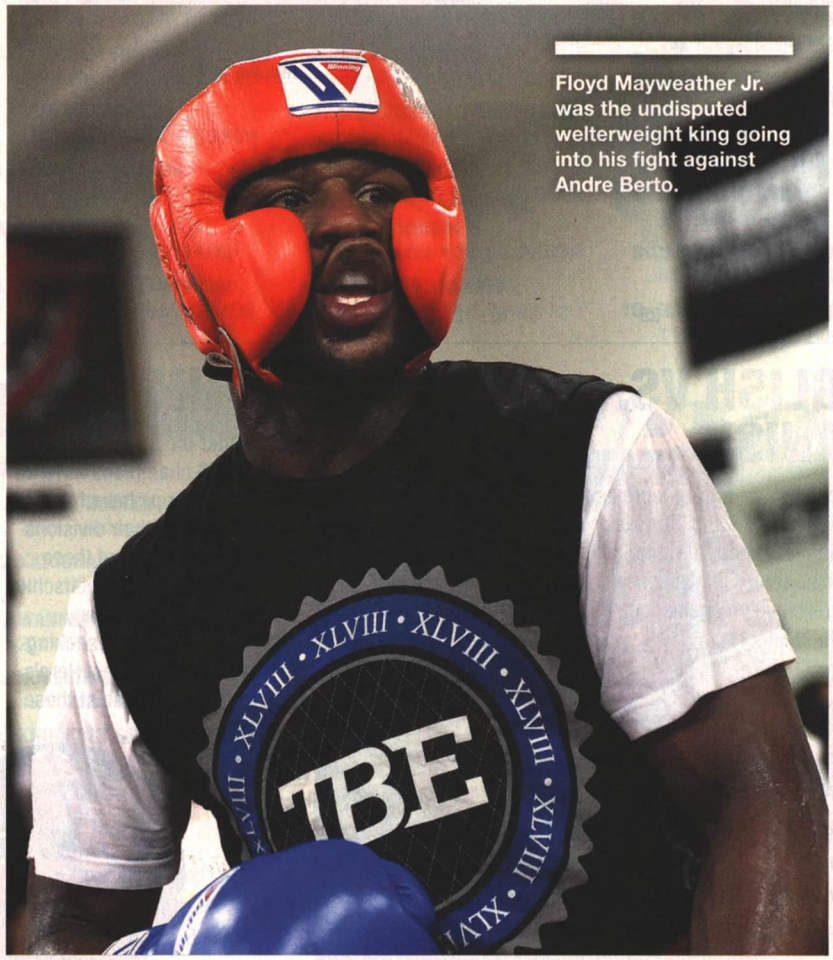
GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: 1-0 (0 KOs)

DONNIE NIETES
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT: 1-0 (0 KOs)

FOCUS ON . . .

WELTERWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 147-pounders.



Floyd Mayweather Jr. was the undisputed welterweight king going into his fight against Andre Berto.

MOST WEEKS RATED: MANNY PACQUIAO **305**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: DANNY GARCIA **6**

OLDEST: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. **38**

YOUNGEST: KEITH THURMAN **26**

MOST FIGHTS: PACQUIAO **65**

FEWEST FIGHTS: SADAM ALI **22**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: ALI, KELL BROOK, GARCIA, MAYWEATHER, THURMAN **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: MARCOS MAIDANA **87.5 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: PACQUIAO **38**

FEWEST KOS: TIM BRADLEY **12**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: MAYWEATHER **48 FIGHTS**

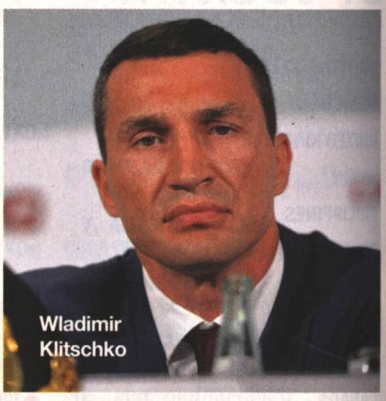
ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: MAYWEATHER **(NO. 1)**, PACQUIAO **(NO. 6)**

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: BRADLEY **(WBO)**, BROOK **(IBF)**, MAYWEATHER **(RING, WBC, WBA)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): DEVON ALEXANDER, KONSTANTIN PONOMAREV, BRANDON RIOS, BRAD SOLOMON, ERROL SPENCE JR.

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.



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LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
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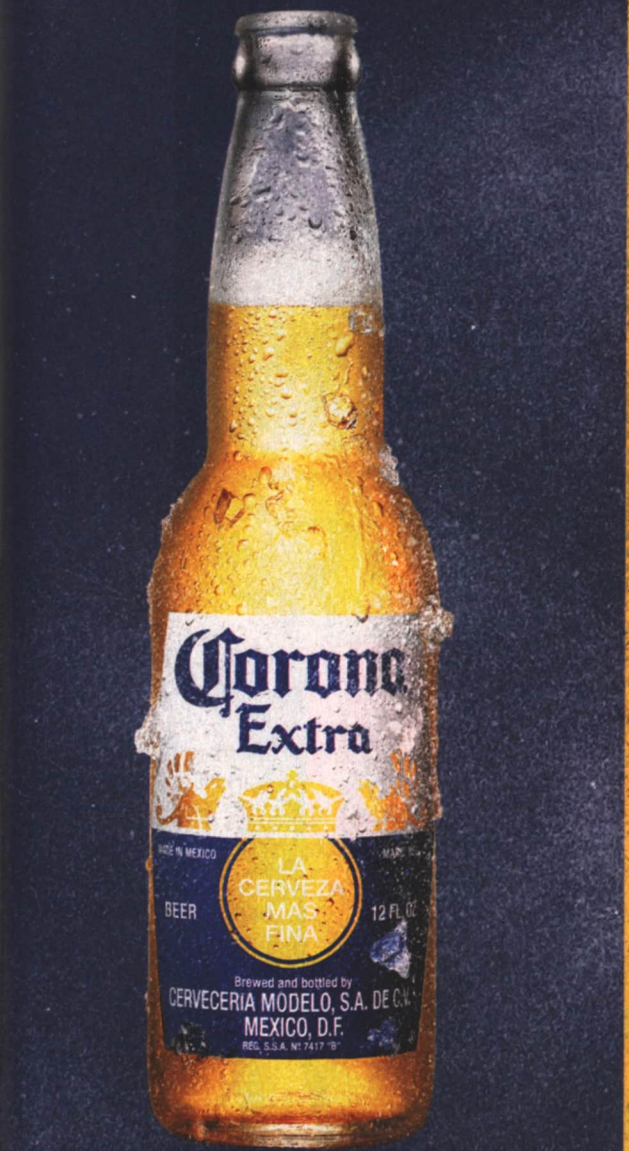

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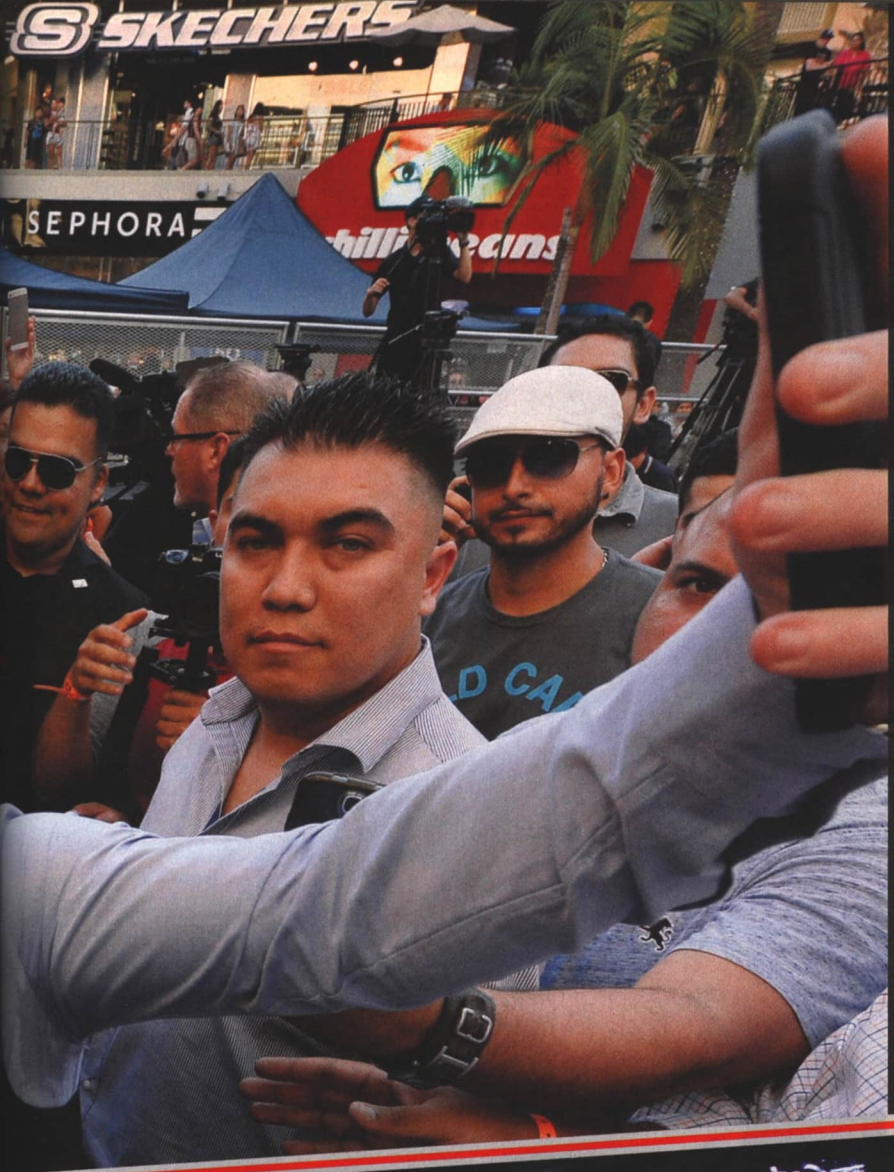
MEXICAN IDOL: NEXT GENERATION

CANELO ALVAREZ'S MIX OF TECHNIQUE AND TENACITY COULD DISPEL THE STEREOTYPE OF MEXICAN BOXERS

By **Norm Frauenheim**



Scars around the eyes, across the forehead and along the chin have defined the face of Mexican boxing for about as long as anybody can remember. That face is a stereotype but it's always there, like jagged evidence of an old wound.

It's a durable remnant, Purple Heart proof of having been there. Each scar is another stripe, worn like chevrons on the khaki sleeves of combat vets who know how to fight because they endured. Survived.

If they won, they won because they were tougher. It's an admirable ethic. Almost heroic. But that's why it's a myth, too. Tough without technique isn't much more than a good radial tire.

But nothing gets more mileage than a stereotype and the brawler has long been the face of Mexican boxing. It still is, despite a long history of brilliant technicians like Ricardo Lopez, Juan Manuel Marquez and Miguel Canto. »

The fans have anointed Canelo Alvarez the No. 1 Mexican boxer.

If Canelo Alvarez beats Miguel Cotto on Nov. 21 in a renewal of the Mexican-Puerto Rican rivalry, he becomes the new face of Mexican boxing. But what would that new face look like?

"I think Mexican boxers have been evolving," says Mauricio Salvador, a versatile Mexico City journalist and author who edits the magazine Esquina Boxeo.

Salvador mentions Marquez, Lopez and Erik Morales as recent examples of Mexican fighters who have executed the trade with an improved level of technical proficiency. He foresees a chance for more of the same from Canelo, the popular Mexican redhead who still has more freckles than scars.

"Canelo, I think, embodies, as Marquez or Morales, a fighter with good fundamentals and some very Mexican tendencies such as going to the body and showing an eagerness to trade in a war, if necessary," Salvador said.

Canelo might need an effective fusion of old and new against the clever and ever-resilient Cotto, a Puerto Rican who has re-invented himself again and again over the years.

But not everybody is convinced there's a transformation, or even a trend underway in Mexican boxing. The brawler and technician have always been there, side by side.

The reigning example of a great technician was Canto, says Rafael Mendoza, who has been watching Mexican boxing for the last six decades as a writer, journalist, editor, adviser and manager. From 1969 through 1982, Mendoza watched the skillful Canto become one of the best flyweights of the 20th century.

"What Floyd Mayweather Jr. is doing today, Canto did and did better," said Mendoza, who lives in Guadalajara and was part of Canelo's management before the fighter signed with Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions.

Canto mastered boxing's technical side in large part because television

Ricardo Lopez (standing over Zolani Petelo) was a master boxer but not hugely popular.

Juan Manuel Marquez evolved from a technician into a more aggressive fighter, which paid off for him.

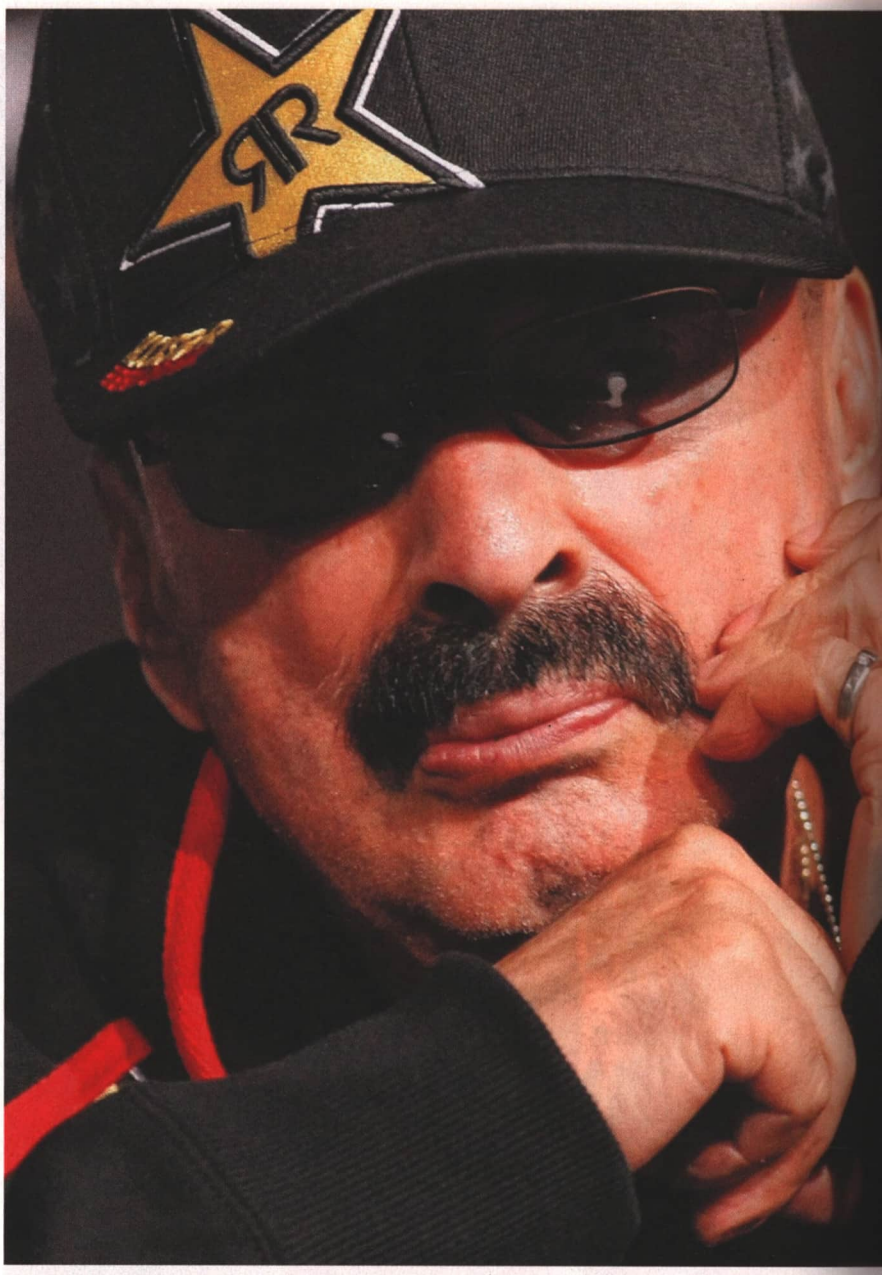
wasn't a factor in his day, says Mendoza, who argues that the networks are the game's de facto matchmakers these days. They underwrite the big fights. They only buy what they want. And, Mendoza says, they want knockdowns, knockouts and lots of action.

"HBO wants a fight with a lot of punches," Mendoza said. "The more, the better. You could land one or could land 20. As long as you throw a lot of punches, HBO will be happy. That's what they're going for in this fight.

"That's fine. I understand. But that kind of emphasis takes away some of the technical skill that we saw in Canto or Sugar Ray Robinson or Willie Pep."

Mendoza says Canto's technical brilliance was overshadowed, first by bantamweight and featherweight great Ruben Olivares (1965-1988) and then by Julio Cesar Chavez, who from 1980 through 2005 forged a career at junior lightweight, lightweight and junior welterweight that is Mexico's version of TBE – The Best Ever.

"Olivares' technical skill was good enough but mostly he had the best



chin I've ever seen in boxing," said Mendoza, who also managed and advised Marquez and Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez, among other Mexican legends. "Chavez was also a pretty good technician but mostly he just had all of these great physical gifts. He had long arms, very heavy hands, great durability and everything else he needed to fight for so long at such a high level."

Canto's technical skill probably would have been overshadowed anyway, Mendoza said. At 112 pounds, he fought at a weight often overlooked. Besides, average fans have never appreciated technical skill, which is another way of saying it's not the best way to get paid. Mayweather, one of history's highest-earning athletes in any sport, is the notable exception.

Until Mayweather, technique just didn't sell, even if it won. Even De La Hoya can attest to that. In the middle of his Hall of Fame career, he hired Jesus Rivero, Canto's former trainer and reputed guru in defensive tactics. Rivero liked to talk about Pep, perhaps the greatest defensive fighter of all time.

"Pep really wasn't all that popular when he was fighting," Mendoza said. "Years later, the fans forgave him, I think, because he was such an innovator."

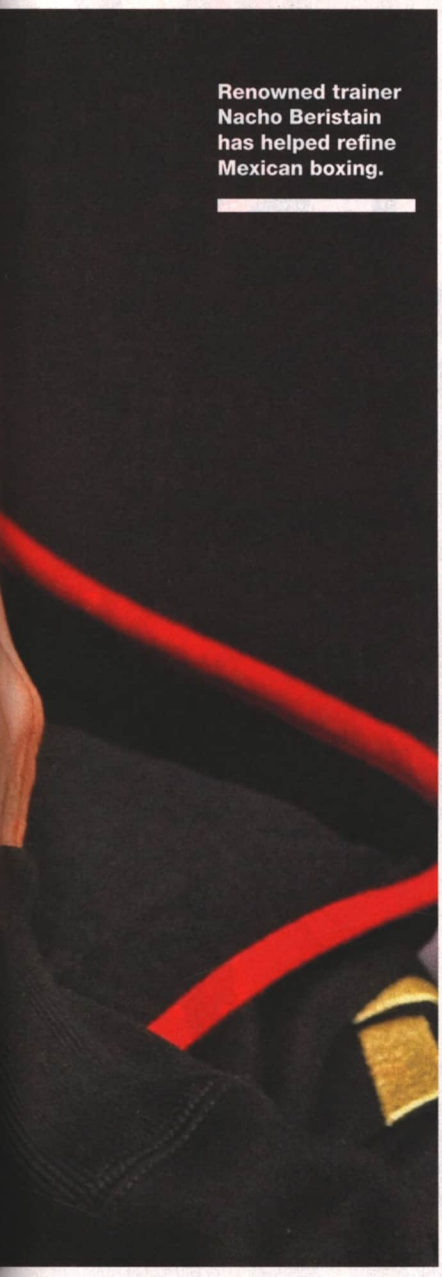
But De La Hoya wasn't going to wait around for that kind of delayed gratification. Boxing is about getting paid. The customers didn't want to see De La Hoya elude punches so much as they wanted to see him take one or two punches to throw one. They wanted to see some of the Mexican stereotype in De La Hoya and – to a degree – he obliged. In a victory over Miguel Angel Gonzalez, De La Hoya showed off a bruise beneath one eye and said it showed that he, too, could be a Mexican warrior.

"Knockouts, not technique," said Mendoza, an aficionado of the technical art but also a realist about the business. "You make money by scoring knockouts. You make money by getting knocked out, too."

Canelo, he says, has the capacity to be a good technical fighter but knows what the fans want to see. And he isn't the first Mexican fighter to emphasize entertainment over technique.

Mendoza was in Humberto Gonzalez's corner during the 1990s for all three fights in the junior flyweight trilogy with Michael Carbajal, an Olympic silver medalist from Phoenix. Carbajal won the first bout in 1993 by getting up twice to score a dramatic seventh-round stoppage in THE RING's Fight of the Year. Gonzalez allowed himself to get into a brawl with Carbajal, a good boxer, yet by nature was a slugger with unusual power.

In the two rematches – first at The Forum in Los Angeles and then in a Mexico City bullring – Gonzalez did what few believed he could do, especially in front of Mexican fans. Carbajal was convinced Gonzalez would be forced into a debilitating war. Mexican fans would accept nothing else. Carbajal, a Mexican-American, believed the Mexican stereotype. But Gonzalez surprised him, not once but twice. He boxed, carefully and with stubborn



Renowned trainer Nacho Beristain has helped refine Mexican boxing.

discipline throughout each of the 12 rounds, winning a split decision in Los Angeles and majority decision in Mexico City.

"Chiquita was a very, very good technician," Mendoza said. "I don't think Carbajal knew that at the time. I think he thought Chiquita would be like that Mexican stereotype. That he would brawl. But he could really box. It's just that he, like so many other guys then and now, thought he could get the job done with a quick knockout, mostly because he had been winning with early knockouts."

Gonzalez learned the thinking-man's side of the scarred game at trainer Nacho Beristain's Romanza Gym in Mexico City alongside Lopez, Daniel Zaragoza and Marquez, whose precise right-hand knockout of Manny Pacquiao serves as an exclamation point on the list of brilliant technicians and perhaps represents a milestone in how much the Mexicans have evolved. Romanza is where many believe Mexican boxing began to move away from the stereotype.

"Mexican boxers have been evolving to more rounded, technical ones ever since (Salvador) Sanchez, and even more when Nacho Beristain took Mexican boxing into his hands," Mauricio Salvador said. "Ricardo Lopez and Juan Manuel Marquez are the best examples of this.

"Right now, it is not that rare that Mexican boxers are technically efficient instead of just brawlers or punchers. Sure, you have your (Orlando) Salidos, (Giovani) Seguras and (Jorge) Arces but also your (Juan Francisco) Estradas, (Gilberto) Ramirez and (Oscar) Valdez."

But it's still not clear how Canelo fits into the theory, if at all. Beristain has never trained him. He lost a majority decision to Mayweather in 2013 that – despite the scorecards – was so one-sided that it left doubts about his corner, trainer Eddie Reynoso and manager Chepo Reynoso.

The 25-year-old Canelo has been with both since the beginning. But Mendoza split with Canelo because he says he did not believe the Reynoso team had the experience to get Canelo through the adversity he faced against Mayweather and might encounter against Cotto.

"The Reynosos are very, very nice people," Mendoza said. "But against Mayweather, you could see that they didn't know what to do.

"Canelo is very loyal. I think he learned then that he's just going to have to figure some things out on his own. We'll see."

Salvador has some of the same concerns.

"At 25, he is already an experienced fighter and even when he has suffered from stamina issues, experience can take a boxer to another level," he said. "My main concern is not him but his corner because I don't think Reynoso can teach new things to Canelo.

"You can see that, in some fights, his corner has been really of no use. But they are very close so I think fighter and trainers are experiencing the same learning curve."

It's hard to know if that curve will include a turn that will take Canelo down a career path he hasn't foreseen and doesn't want. He conceded that the Mayweather loss was a tough lesson.

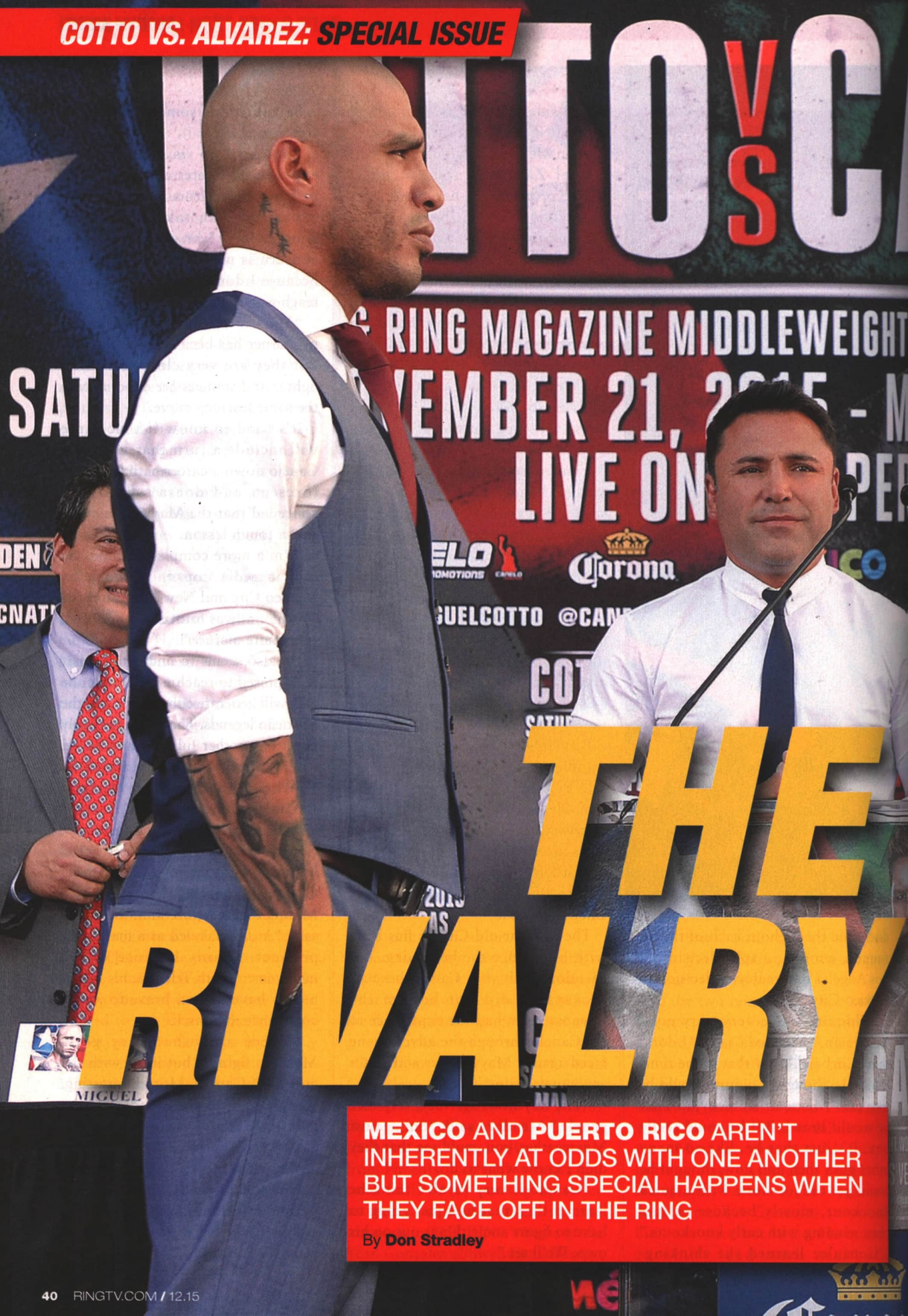
"I'm a more complete fighter," he said at media stops in Los Angeles, Mexico City and New York after the Cotto bout was formally announced. "I'm more mature."

He also seems to understand that he is poised to reach a new level, one that will generate comparisons to the Mexican legends. There will probably never be another Julio Cesar Chavez, just as surely as there'll never be another Babe Ruth or Michael Jordan or Muhammad Ali.

"Yes, Canelo is the best-positioned fighter for being the next great Mexican fighter, just as Sanchez, Chavez, Barrera, Morales and Marquez were before him," Salvador said. "At first labeled as a marketing product, mainly because of his involvement with Televisa, his recent moves have shown bravado and a confidence in himself.

"There are other very good Mexican fighters but none with the appeal of Canelo. More interesting, Canelo would be in position to gain the middleweight crown from Cotto and that is, I think, a huge achievement for Mexican boxing."

An achievement big enough perhaps to finally replace that old stereotype with a new, unscarred face.

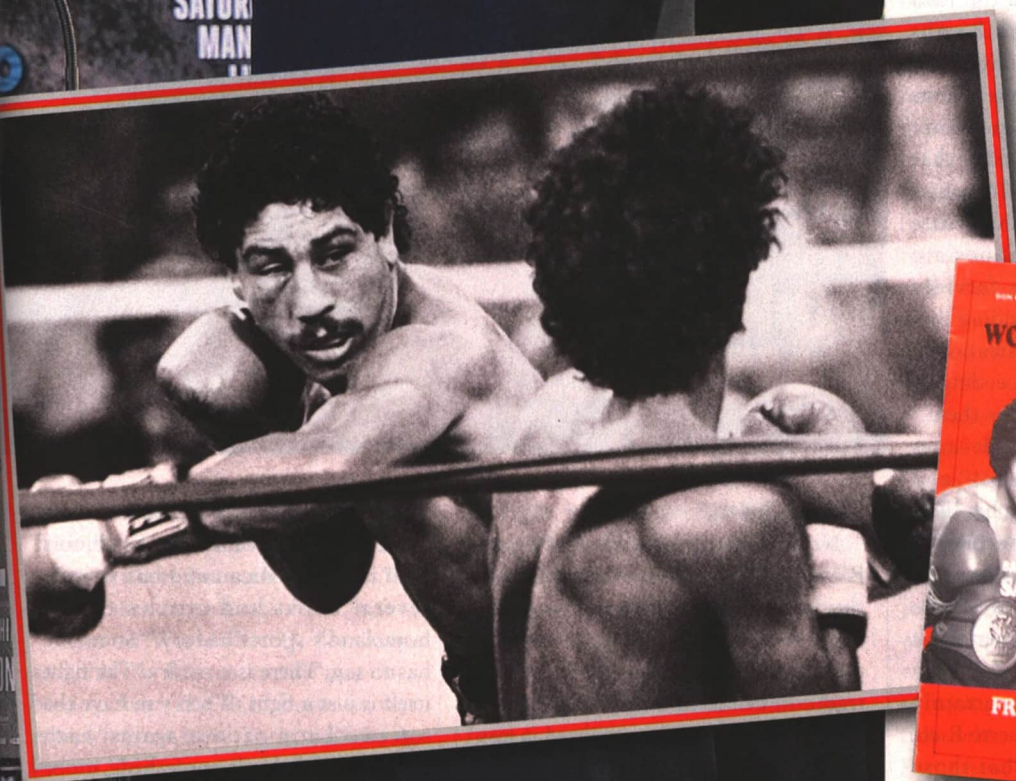


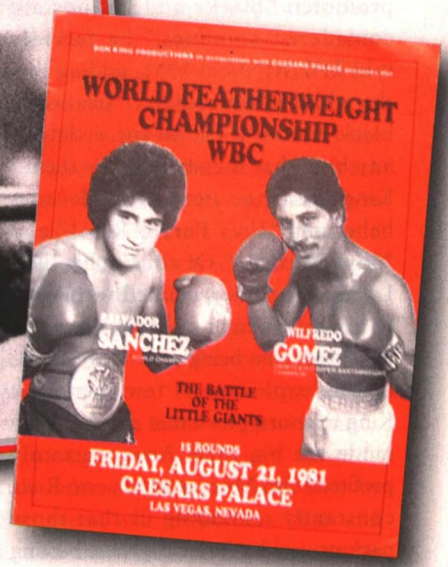
THE RIVALRY

MEXICO AND **PUERTO RICO** AREN'T INHERENTLY AT ODDS WITH ONE ANOTHER BUT SOMETHING SPECIAL HAPPENS WHEN THEY FACE OFF IN THE RING

By **Don Stradley**

The boxing rivalry between Mexico and Puerto Rico can't be traced to a specific origin but a convenient starting point might be the 1981 bout between Mexico's Salvador Sanchez and Puerto Rico's Wilfredo Gomez, a Caesars' Palace event dubbed by promoter Don King as "The Battle of the Little Giants." In a way, King was casting about for his next big thing. Muhammad Ali was fading fast and Larry Holmes wasn't the new Ali. Also, Sugar Ray Leonard wanted no part of Don King. Hence, King started focusing on the lighter weight classes, where Latino fighters had been dominant for years. WBC featherweight titlist Sanchez was a star in Mexico. Gomez, the WBC junior featherweight titlist, was an even bigger star in Puerto Rico. So King rolled the dice on his little giants and won, to the point where this bout should be considered the "big bang" of the whole Mexican-Puerto Rican argument. »

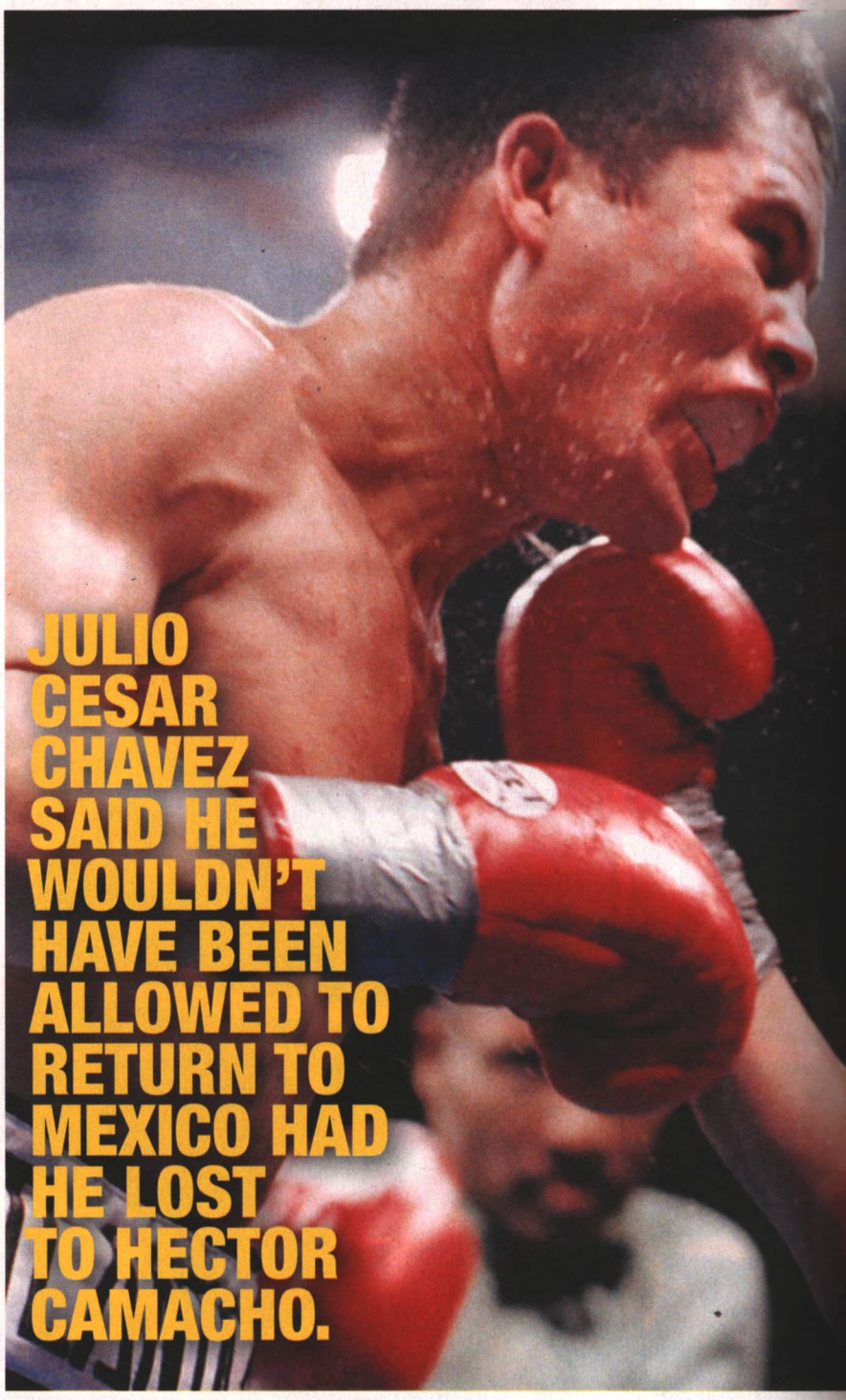




Miguel Cotto vs. Canelo Alvarez will take its place alongside such classic matchups as Wilfredo Gomez vs. Salvador Sanchez.

The Mexican and Puerto Rican fans made Sanchez-Gomez into great television. More boisterous than a typical U.S. fight audience, the rival groups waved flags and sang and even mocked each other's national anthems. Meanwhile, Gomez had flown the Apollo Sound salsa band in from Puerto Rico while Sanchez answered with a group of promenading mariachis. The moment the two fighters came through the ropes, reported Sports Illustrated, "they were joined by their respective musicians in what appeared to be a ringside sock hop." In comparison, the crowd for the Leonard-Thomas Hearns bout which took place that month in the same venue was a typical Las Vegas scene of jaded celebrity geezers. Not so for the Sanchez-Gomez mob, which was not only witnessing history but making it. Jose Torres said at the time that Americans were probably shocked by the rowdiness of the crowd but were finally seeing "our national Latino disposition." King took notes. So did Bob Arum. The bout, won by Sanchez on an eighth-round KO, rammed home the idea that Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were a combustible combination.

King signed as many Latino fighters as he could find, trying to corner this new market by insisting that an African-American could relate to Latinos better than any white promoter. "Blacks and Latinos are considered dummies," he fervidly told THE RING in 1981, adding that the white world couldn't "swallow a black man or a Latino succeeding in anything that is controlled by them." King spent the next three decades bellowing "Viva Puerto Rico!" and "Viva Mexico!" Of course, his little Latino warriors remained secondary to his heavyweight stable but they still benefited from being part of the 1980s boxing explosion. A few even took King to court, proof that they'd finally made the big time. Arum certainly profited from Mexico and Puerto Rico, constantly reminding us that those nations, unlike America, treat boxing "like a religion."



JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ SAID HE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO RETURN TO MEXICO HAD HE LOST TO HECTOR CAMACHO.

Nowadays the Mexican-Puerto Rican conflict is down to a predictable shtick. TV commentators grow misty eyed as they talk about "national pride" and how there is a grand tradition of Mexicans fighting Puerto Ricans. Yet some suggest there is less to this rivalry than we imagine.

"Rivalries are constructed," said Dr. Antonio Sotomayor, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois who is Puerto Rican and has written several books and articles on his homeland's sports history. "Someone has to say, 'There is a rivalry.' The fight itself is just a fight. When you have the top two Latin nations against each other, you'd think something more is at stake. But this so-called boxing

Julio Cesar Chavez (left) dominated Hector Camacho in their Mexico vs. Puerto Rico showdown in 1992.

rivalry is mostly hype to sell tickets. Trust me, it means just as much when a Puerto Rican beats an American."

Viva Mexico, indeed.

Prior to World War II, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans rarely met in a boxing ring. The fight business was mostly about New York, with Irish, Italian, Jewish and a smattering of African American fighters sharing the spotlight. Latino fighters? Why fly in a prospect from San Jacinto when you could fill out your undercard with two Italians from Flatbush? The fact that most Latino fighters toiled in the lighter divisions worked against them, too. The glamor divisions were found between welterweight and heavyweight; small Latino fighters were considered a novelty.

Granted, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans did fight each other occasionally. A 1934 bout between Sixto Escobar and Rodolfo "Baby" Casanova in Montreal saw Escobar win what local officials billed as a world bantamweight title by a ninth-round KO. When Escobar returned to San Juan, schools closed for the day so everybody could greet "El Gallito" at the docks for the victory parade. A few months later Escobar traveled to Mexico City and dropped a 10-round non-title bout to Juan Zurita, a future champion from Guadalajara who would finish his career with 131 wins. But these bouts were hardly newsmakers. For the most part, Mexicans fought in Mexico and Puerto Ricans fought in Puerto Rico. It would take many years for either group to become part of the American boxing landscape. As was usually the case in boxing, it wasn't talent that talked; it was the loud, bullying voice of economics.

The first of two key factors was California's gradual rise as a boxing hotbed, thanks mostly to promoters like George Parnassus, who packed his Los Angeles shows with Mexican sluggers. With an eye on the money to be made in California, Mexican fighters seemed to appear as if they were being created on an assembly line. Concurrently was "the Great Migration" of Puerto Ricans to New York during the 1950s. As the number of Puerto Ricans in New York increased, promoters and managers searched for fighters from the island to showcase in local arenas. Ta-daaa! By the 1960s, two of boxing's most popular champions – Carlos Ortiz and Jose Torres – were Puerto Rican. This was part of the "Latin boxing boom" where fighters from various Spanish-speaking countries began winning title belts, aided in no small way by Parnassus, who helped establish and finance the WBC in 1962 in part so his

Mexican imports could fight for newly created titles.

As each group grew in numbers, it was inevitable that Mexicans and Puerto Ricans would meet more frequently in the ring. The results were almost always notable because the fighters of each group are generally straight-ahead punchers who give no quarter. You'll find some slick boxers from each side but, for the most part, Mexican and Puerto Rican fighters like to bang it out. As Miguel Cotto said many years ago before meeting Antonio Margarito, "If you put one Puerto Rican fighter in front of a Mexican fighter, you're going to see a good fight."

The late Torres once surmised that the competition was less about Mexicans vs. Puerto Ricans than it was about all Latino fighters and how a certain familiarity between the groups gave these matchups extra fire. "You see," Torres told THE RING in 1981, "we know each other. We know how to intimidate each other. And we know how to resist it. But we are very dramatic in the process. Some of us even get violent, a luxury we seldom (reveal in front of) the gringo."

And the customers give the bouts an added kick.

"Latin fans attend boxing matches as if they're part of a performance," Dr. Sotomayor said. "It's a celebration

Carlos Ortiz took part in one of the early high-profile fights in the rivalry, stopping Battling Torres in 1960.

of being part of a prime event at a time when Puerto Rico and other Latin countries aren't prime (in terms of economics). We may boo a Mexican fighter but that's the role we play in the audience. It's festive, it's theater."

There have been times, though, when the trash talk took on an uglier dimension. This was especially true of Julio Cesar Chavez's heyday, when he seemed to be dusting off a different Puerto Rican opponent every month. After beating Hector Camacho, Chavez said he wouldn't be allowed to return to Mexico had he lost. Perhaps more than any other fighter, Chavez made the rivalry feel real. But was the trash talk just good old-fashioned pre-fight banter? Or did it go deeper? Is there a sociological slant to all of this? Is it to do with Puerto Ricans being free to enter the United States as they please while Mexicans are not? When a Mexican whips a Puerto Rican in the ring, is he symbolically striking a blow against America?

"There's always more than just competition in sports," said Dr. Sotomayor.

Yet Dr. Dain Borges, a professor in the University of Chicago's Latin-Ameican Studies program, doesn't see the much-hyped rivalry as being rooted in anything political.

"It just feels like a college rivalry that builds up over the years," Borges said. "There's certainly no historical reason for it. Mexicans and Puerto Ricans know each other through pop music and movies. There's not a lot of interaction between the two. Any sort of rivalry is inexplicable."

If anyone is keeping score, Mexico has created far more fighters, more champions and more Hall of Famers than the much smaller Puerto Rico and proudly guards its reputation as the top Latino boxing group. Still, there's always a sense that this "feud" goes beyond wins and losses and belts.

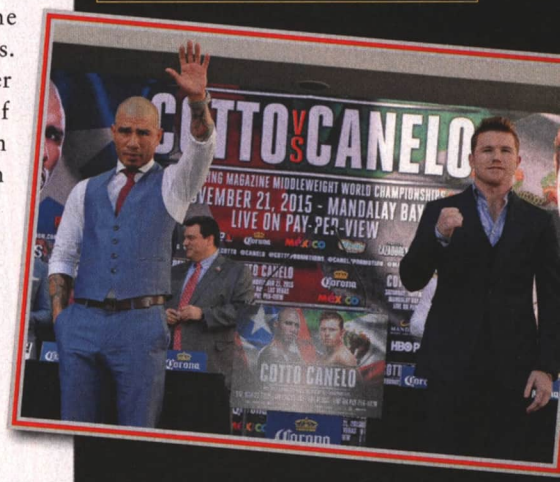
"These fighters," said Dr. Sotomayor, "are carrying the weight of nations in their hands. And to Latin people, the fighter represents the daily struggle of dealing with life. The symbolism of a boxer is very different from a baseball player. He's a *fighter.* There's more identification."

Yet this intense audience identification doesn't manifest in the sort of dark emotions one might find at a Yankees-Red Sox game. To hear Dr. Sotomayor tell it, just being in the arena is a victory of sorts. "The attention is on us, and we show exuberance. In the end, the Puerto Rican doesn't go home heartbroken if our fighter loses. We're happy to be present. We showed that we exist. Even when the promotions rely heavily on stereotypes about how Latin people are 'hot blooded' and violent, we put up with the stereotypes in order to be part of these special events. Maybe someday we'll look at this differently and wonder if the negatives outweigh the positives."

Oh, Sixto Escobar, what have you wrought?

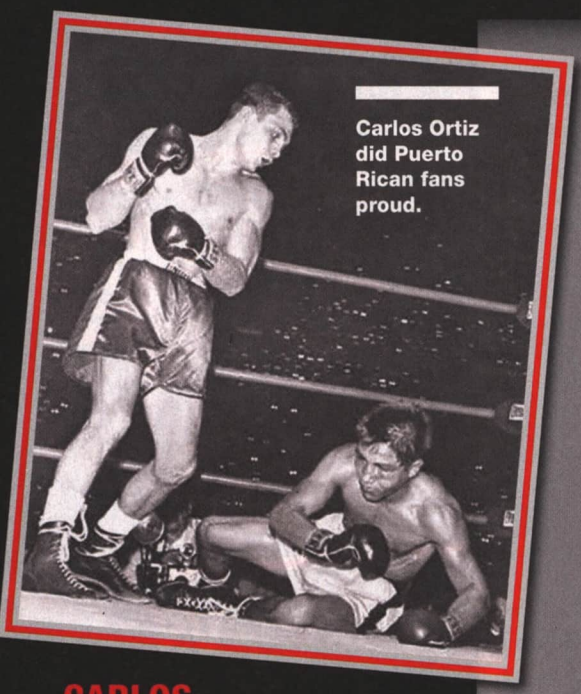
"The bigger picture," Dr. Sotomayor said, "is that Puerto Rico and Mexico have a lot of respect for each other. There's no real blood rivalry. If a Mexican is fighting an American, the Puerto Rican fan will root for the Mexican."

So what precisely does it mean when we see a Mexican and a Puerto Rican fighting in a ring more than three decades after Sanchez-Gomez? It means Mexico and Puerto Rico remain poor and their young people still turn to boxing as a way out. It means the promoters who felt these Latino bombers were worth showcasing were correct, even if their motivations were not exactly unselfish. And it means we'll probably get a memorable fight. Besides, it's easier than drumming up a feud between Canada and Sweden. RING



MEXICO VS. PUERTO RICO: THE CLASSICS

Warriors from rival boxing factories Mexico and Puerto Rico have given fans so many great fights over the decades. Most of us might think of the classic showdown between little giants Salvador Sanchez and Wilfredo Gomez first but this oh-so-special rivalry certainly doesn't start or end there. It began with a smattering of fights before World War II, picked up steam in the 1950s and never really slowed down after that. You'll find on the following pages 10 of the most memorable and significant Mexico vs. Puerto Rico battles over the past half century-plus.



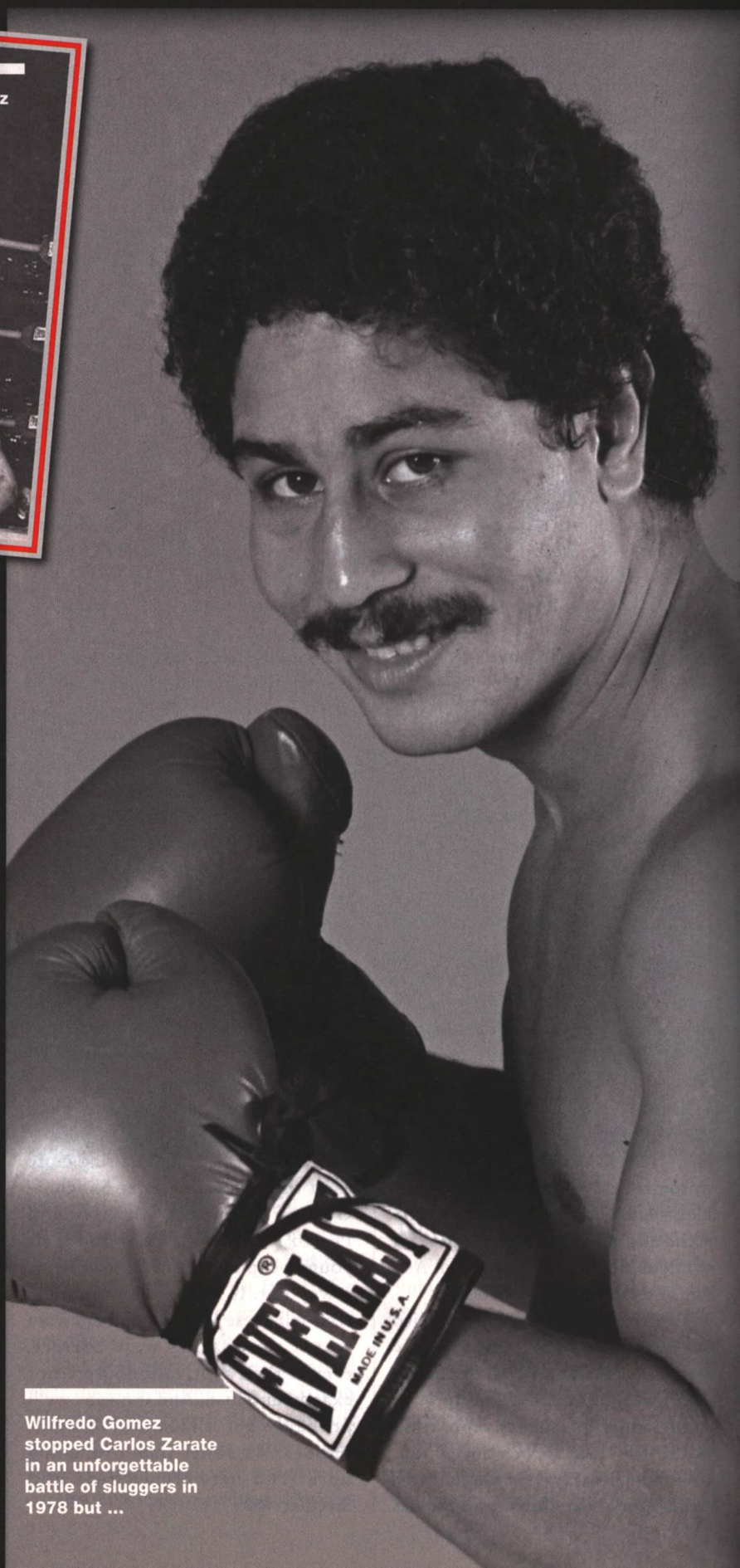
Carlos Ortiz did Puerto Rican fans proud.

CARLOS ORTIZ VS. BATTLING TORRES

Date: Feb. 4, 1960
Location: Los Angeles
Result: Ortiz KO 10
Background: Ortiz made the first defense of his junior welterweight belt against Torres, an undefeated Mexican knockout artist known as "The Reynosa Rattlesnake." Torres was game but Ortiz used his superior skills to stop him at 2:56 of the 10th. Torres was never quite the same. He'd lose by KO eight times during the next seven years, as if Ortiz had fatally exposed the glass in his jaw.

PIPINO CUEVAS VS. ANGEL ESPADA I

Date: July 17, 1976
Location: Mexicali, Mexico
Result: Cuevas KO 2
Background: With a left hook that could shake the walls of a city, 18-year-old Cuevas won



Wilfredo Gomez stopped Carlos Zarate in an unforgettable battle of sluggers in 1978 but ...

... the Puerto Rican fell to Mexican counterpart Salvador Sanchez in a 1981 classic.

the WBA welterweight title by dropping Espada thrice in the second round. The bout served as Cuevas' dramatic introduction to the boxing world – he was the youngest fighter to win a 147-pound title – and began an impressive welterweight title reign that would include 11 defenses. Cuevas would beat Espada twice more by KO, first in 1977 and then again in 1979.

WILFREDO GOMEZ VS. CARLOS ZARATE

Date: Oct. 28, 1978
Location: San Juan, Puerto Rico
Result: Gomez KO 5
Background: Undaunted by Zarate's fierce reputation as a knockout puncher, Gomez flattened Zarate twice in the fourth and once more in the fifth. Zarate's corner realized their man was done and threw in the towel. The bout, which featured everything from punches thrown after the bell to deliriously screaming Puerto Rican fans storming the ring, shot Gomez to stardom in his homeland.

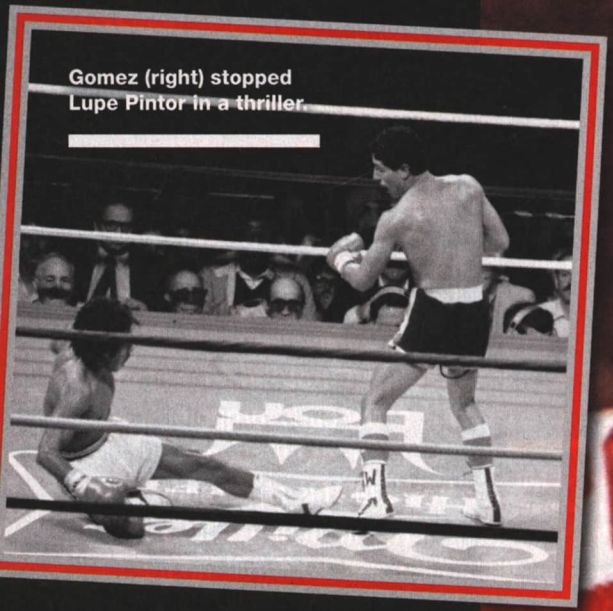
SALVADOR SANCHEZ VS. WILFREDO GOMEZ

Date: Aug. 21, 1981
Location: Las Vegas
Result: Sanchez KO 8
Background: Sanchez started the show early, dropping Gomez in the first and fracturing his cheekbone. The Puerto Rican hero showed his mettle by surviving the

onslaught and rumbling on even terms with Sanchez during the next few rounds. Still, this was Sanchez's night and nothing would deny him his chance at greatness. He put Gomez on the canvas again in the eighth and though Gomez was willing to continue, referee Carlos Padilla had seen enough. The victory earned Sanchez major acclaim.

WILFREDO GOMEZ VS. LUPE PINTOR

Date: Dec. 3, 1982
Location: New Orleans
Result: Gomez KO 14
Background: Gomez was making a record 17th defense of his junior featherweight title while bantamweight champ Pintor was moving up in weight. The bout was a Fight of the Year candidate, with Pintor bravely absorbing all Gomez threw at him and tossing back his own bombs. Gomez's firepower proved too much, though. After Pintor suffered



Gomez (right) stopped Lupe Pintor in a thriller.

Chavez (right) received stiff resistance from Juan Laporte but emerged victorious.

the second of two knockdowns in the 14th, referee Arthur Mercante didn't bother counting him out.

JOSE LUIS RAMIREZ VS. EDWIN ROSARIO II

Date: Nov. 3, 1984
Location: San Juan, Puerto Rico
Result: Ramirez KO 4
Background: Rosario had previously scored a decision win over Ramirez for the vacant WBC lightweight belt. Rosario, known as "Chapo," looked to be on his way to another victory by jumping on Ramirez at the start of the rematch. Showing incredible guts, Mexico's Ramirez survived knockdowns in the first and second rounds to come wailing back in the third. In the fourth, after trapping a dazed Rosario in a corner, Ramirez threw more than 30 unanswered punches before referee Steve Crosson waved the fight over. The intensity of this bout, which was THE RING's Fight of the Year, seemed to seep right through our TV sets.

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ VS. JUAN LAPORTE

Date: Dec 12, 1986
Location: New York City
Result: Chavez UD 12
Background: Not all of Chavez's Puerto Rican opponents succumbed easily. Laporte, a former featherweight titleholder, gave Chavez several rough moments,

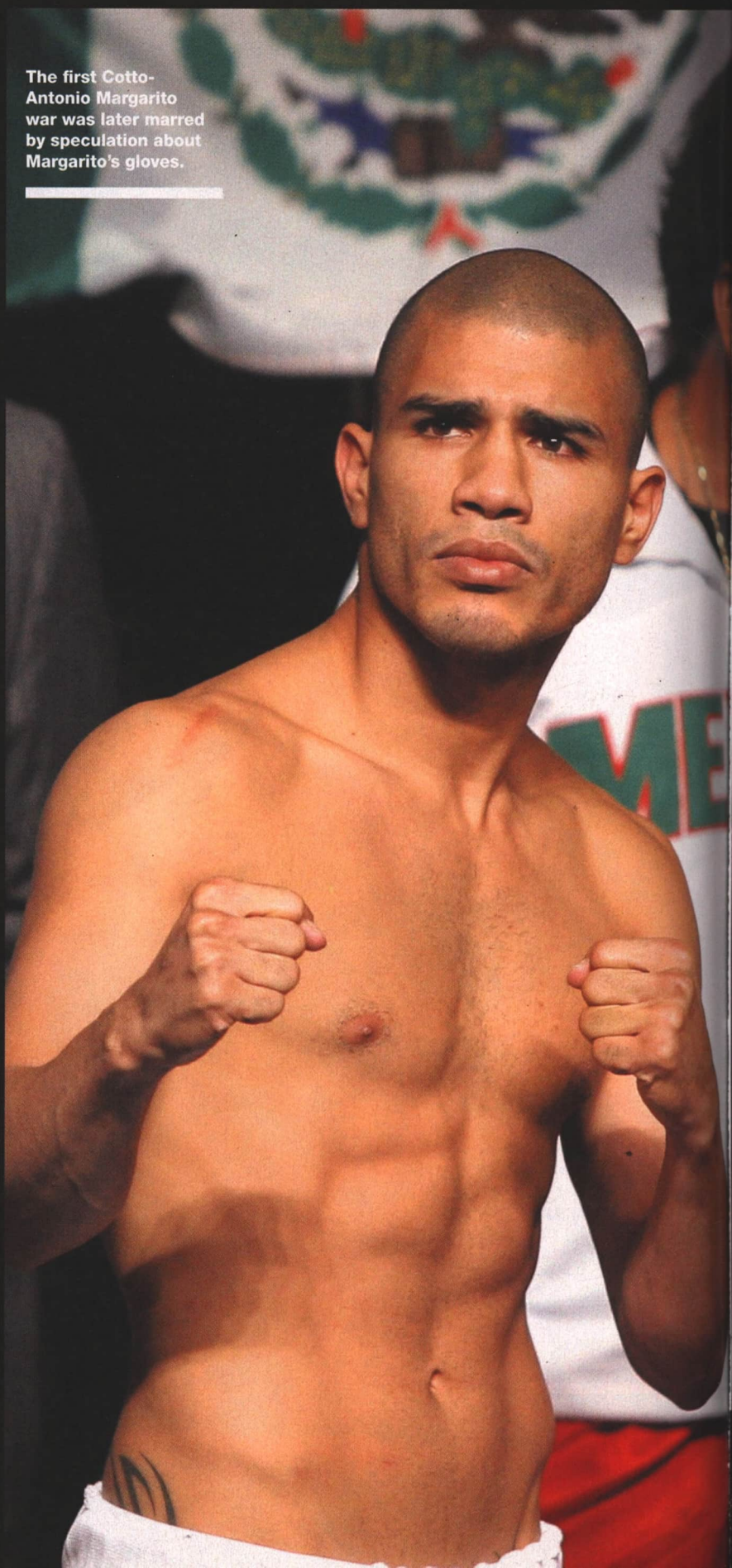
fighting him at close quarters for much of the bout. In fact, Laporte had such a strong 12th round that many of the Puerto Rican's supporters felt he'd done enough to win. Still, Chavez retained his WBC junior lightweight title and walked out of Madison Square Garden with a unanimous decision victory. The scores were 117-112, 115-114 and 114-113.

IVAN CALDERON VS. HUGO CAZARES I

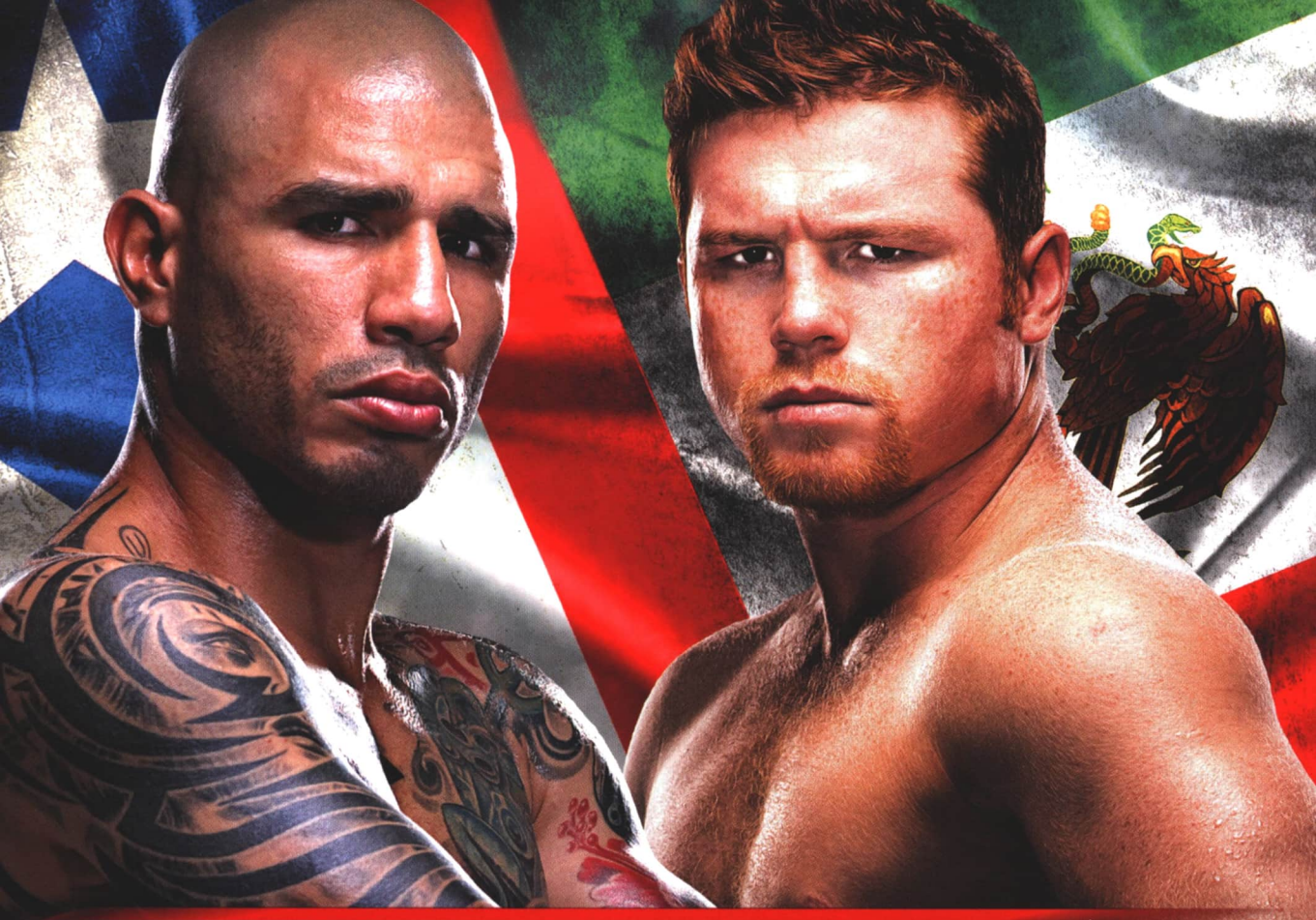
Date: Aug. 25, 2007
Location: Bayamon, Puerto Rico
Result: Calderon SD 12
Background: Puerto Rico's Calderon moved up to 108 pounds after a four-year reign as WBO strawweight boss. Junior flyweight champ Cazares struggled to make weight, but the bout was a 12-round rumble nonetheless. The stronger, harder-punching Cazares found himself cut from a butt in the eighth, which seemed to spur him on. He sent Calderon to the canvas in that round but the slick-boxing "Iron Boy" survived the knockdown, endured a tough ninth and rallied down the stretch to pull out a split decision.

ANTONIO MARGARITO VS. MIGUEL COTTO I

Date: July 26, 2008
Location: Las Vegas
Result: Margarito KO 11
Background: Memories of



The first Cotto-Antonio Margarito war was later marred by speculation about Margarito's gloves.



COTTO VS CANELO

WBC & RING MAGAZINE MIDDLEWEIGHT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2015
MANDALAY BAY - LAS VEGAS
LIVE ON PAY-PER-VIEW

RNS ROC NATION SPORTS · GOLDEN BOY · Corona · COTTO PROMOTIONS · CANELO PROMOTIONS

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COTTO VS CANELO

TALE OF THE TAPE

34 - AGE - 25

5'8" - HEIGHT - 5'9"

67" - REACH - 72"

17" - NECK - 16"

41" - CHEST - 43"
NORMAL

43" - CHEST - 44"
EXPANDED

14.5" - BICEPS - 16"

12" - FOREARM - 14"

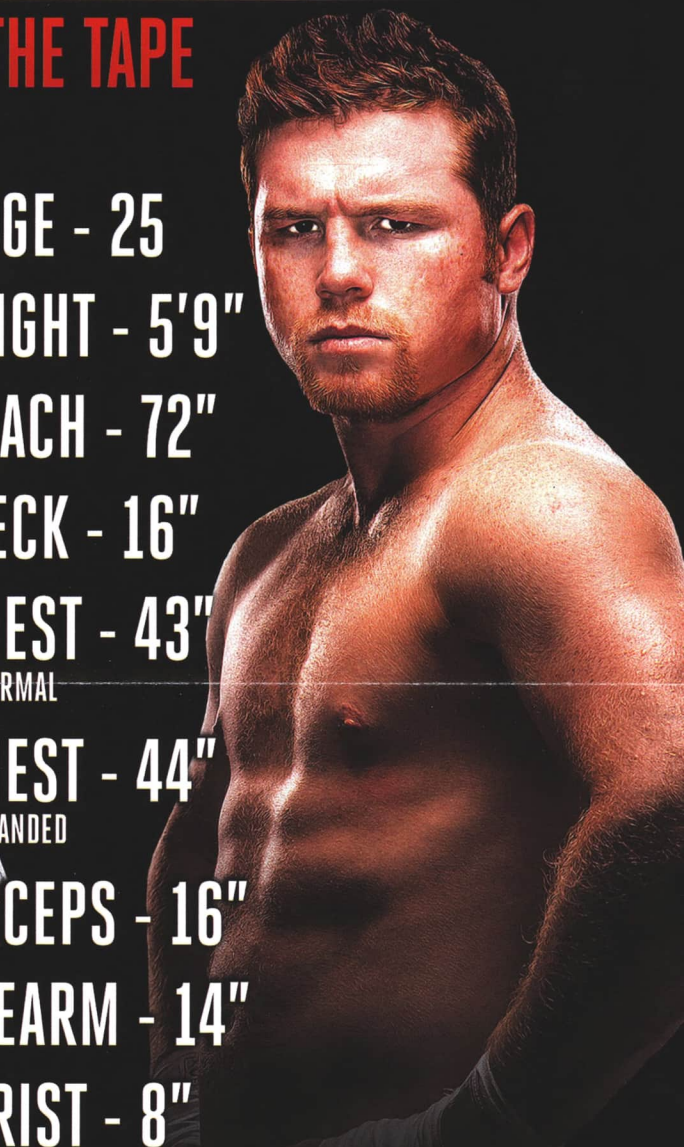
8" - WRIST - 8"

12" - FIST - 12"

32" - WAIST - 32"

21" - THIGH - 24"

#COTTOCANELO



COTTO
ORTHODOX
PUERTO RICAN
40-4 (33KOs)

CANELO
ORTHODOX
MEXICAN
45-1-1 (32KOs)

The RING SCORECARD

MAIN EVENT

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total

PRELIMINARY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
BLUE CORNER													
RED CORNER													

PRELIMINARY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
BLUE CORNER													
RED CORNER													

PRELIMINARY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
BLUE CORNER													
RED CORNER													

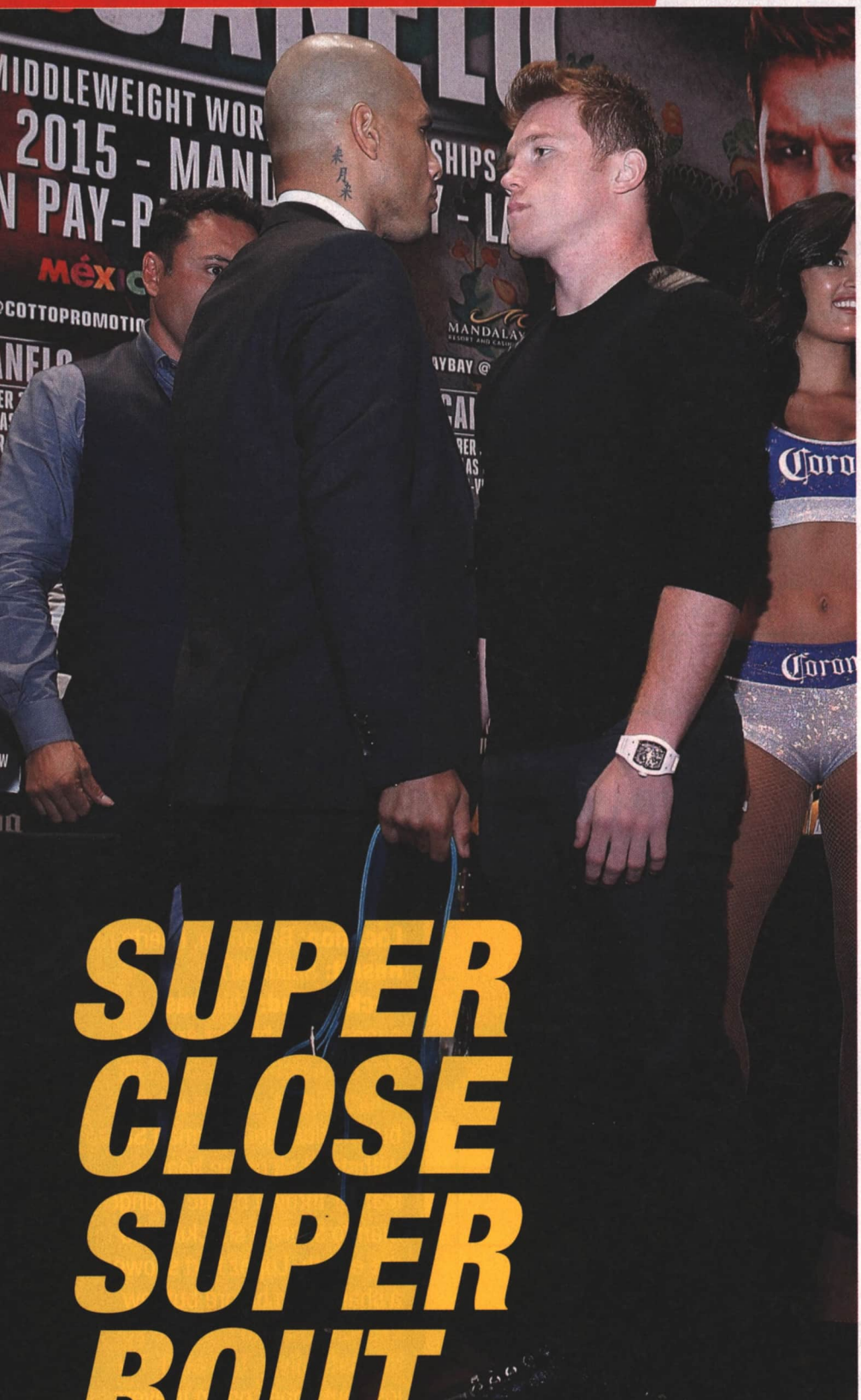
PRELIMINARY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
BLUE CORNER													
RED CORNER													

this bout have been marred by unproven speculation that Margarito fought with loaded gloves. At the time it was revered as one of the best Mexico-Puerto Rico contests ever, with lots of back and forth action before Margarito came on strong to score a late-round stoppage. Margarito enjoyed brief stardom after the bout but a glove scandal going into his fight against Shane Mosley (for which he was suspended), an eye injury and losses to Mosley, Manny Pacquiao and finally Cotto sent him straight to boxing's junkyard. He has talked about returning to the business, perhaps hoping for a rubber match with Cotto.

ORLANDO SALIDO VS. JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ I

Date: April 16, 2011
Location: Bayamon, Puerto Rico
Result: Salido KO 8
Background: This was supposed to be just another day at the office for budding Puerto Rican superstar Lopez but Mexican journeyman Salido withstood all of the heavy leather thrown by the younger man to score a shocking KO in the eighth. Lopez had shown a shaky chin before but few expected him to crumble so dramatically in this bout. The loss put Lopez on an irreversible downhill skid. Along with losing to Salido by KO in their rematch, Lopez suffered three other losses until he finally announced his retirement in 2014.



SUPER CLOSE SUPER BOUT

THE RING'S **HEAD-TO-HEAD ANALYSIS**

By **Doug Fischer**

It goes without saying that the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez showdown is a major boxing event given the popularity of both fighters and the storied national rivalry they bring to the ring.

However, the middleweight championship is also an even-money crossroads bout and one of the best stylistic matchups that could be made in any division. The Puerto Rican champ and Mexican challenger have many of the same attributes – accurate power punching, brute strength, patience and poise – and each is able to counter the other's advantages.

Cotto has the edge in experience, technique and versatility but Alvarez is the bigger, younger and fresher fighter. The checks and balances beg many questions:

Cotto is almost 10 years older but how much wear and tear is in those extra years? Alvarez has 45 bouts under his belt but how much quality is in his pro experience? Can Cotto take a page from Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s book and befuddle Alvarez with lateral movement? Can Alvarez force Cotto into a battle of attrition as Antonio Margarito and Manny Pacquiao did? How much does Freddie Roach bring to Cotto's game?

It's a fight that may come down to intangibles.

But here's how Cotto and Alvarez match up in 20 categories, with each fighter rated on a scale of 0 to 5. (A score of 100 would denote the perfect fighter.)

Canelo Alvarez (right) and Miguel Cotto are equal in eight of the 20 categories.

HAND SPEED
Cotto – 3.5
Canelo – 3.0
Cotto's slightly better reflexes, sharper technique and expert timing help his punches land a little bit quicker than Canelo's.

FOOTWORK
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 3.5
Cotto is known as a seek-and-destroy fighter but he can be light on his feet and his stick-and-move game has always been world class. Canelo is often stationary.

POWER (LEAD HAND)
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 4.0
Cotto is a converted southpaw so his jab and hook have always been heavy. Canelo has excellent leverage with his left and his greater size makes his power equal to Cotto's.

POWER (TRAIL HAND)
Cotto – 3.5
Canelo – 4.0
Both fighters carry significant "pop" in their right hands. Canelo commits more to his right than Cotto does.

JAB
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 3.5
Canelo has a good jab when he uses it but he sometimes neglects this basic punch. Cotto uses it more often and to good effect.

HOOK
Cotto – 4.5
Canelo – 4.5
Cotto's hook is delivered with near-perfect technique and timing. Thus, it lands with a lot of power. Canelo's hook is not as crisp but it's thrown often and with more leverage.

CROSS/UPPERCUT
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 4.5
Both fighters pack a lot of power in their crosses and uppercuts but Canelo uses these two punches very well (especially in combination) and loads up more with them.

BODY PUNCHING
Cotto – 4.5
Canelo – 4.5
Body punching was once Cotto's bread and butter. Under Roach, it has resurfaced as a major part of his arsenal. Canelo also does damage with his relentless body attack.

INFIGHTING SKILLS
Cotto – 4.5
Canelo – 4.5
Both fighters are very comfortable – and extremely dangerous – when engaging in close.

ATHLETICISM
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 4.0
Both are strong, durable fighters with very good reflexes and hand-eye coordination. However, neither has elite-level speed.

ENDURANCE
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 3.5
Canelo's endurance has been questioned for years, which is a little strange given that he has gone the 12-round distance eight times, losing only to Mayweather. Still, Cotto is viewed as more proven in this area.

ABILITY TO SLIP AND BLOCK
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 4.0
Both fighters are competent (but not special) defensively, utilizing head- and upper-body movement and blocking to avoid punches.

PHYSICAL CONDITION
Cotto – 4.0
Canelo – 4.0
Both fighters are consummate professionals when it comes to their preparation. They train to get the most out of their strength, stamina and accuracy.

POISE AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH EXTERNAL PRESSURES
Cotto – 5.0
Canelo – 5.0
Both were groomed for the spotlight from Day One. Cotto was a 2000 Olympian. Canelo turned pro at 15. The two have headlined a combined 12 pay-per-view events.

KILLER INSTINCT
Cotto – 5.0
Canelo – 5.0
Both fighters are offensive boxers by nature. Both seek the knockout and both know when (and how) to close the show.

INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIC DEXTERITY
Cotto – 4.5
Canelo – 4.0
Both fighters are boxer-punchers, thinking aggressors. Cotto is more versatile than Canelo and a little more polished.

CHIN AND RESILIENCE
Cotto – 3.5
Canelo – 4.5
Cotto has been in many ring wars, including two late stoppages (to Margarito and Pacquiao). That wear and tear detracts from his durability and punch resistance. Canelo has never been down or beat up in any of his fights.

EXPERIENCE
Cotto – 5.0
Canelo – 4.5
Canelo is as experienced as a 25-year-old prizefighter can be but Cotto (who had a stellar amateur career) has put together a Hall of Fame resume during his 15-year pro career.

QUALITY OF OPPONENTS
Cotto – 5.0
Canelo – 4.5
Canelo's opposition is nothing to sneeze at. He has faced eight titleholders in his 10-year pro career, including the pound-for-pound king and Erislandy Lara. However, Cotto has faced 19 titleholders.

CORNER
Cotto – 5.0
Canelo – 4.0
Team Canelo includes the very successful and experienced father-and-son team of Jose and Edison Reynoso. However, Cotto's coach, Hall of Famer Freddie Roach, is arguably the most successful active trainer in boxing.

TOTAL:
COTTO: 85.5
CANELO: 83.0

SUMMARY AND PREDICTION: Fans will not be disappointed with this "super bout." Cotto and Canelo will set a brisk and aggressive tempo and both will take chances. It will be a nip-and-tuck battle that mixes boxing with brawling but this is one of the rare occasions when the fighter with the lower Head-to-Head score prevails. Canelo's combination punching and ability to incur less damage during infighting will gradually wear Cotto down over the distance. Canelo will win a close but deserved decision in a grueling and entertaining fight.

Wladimir Klitschko is appreciated more in his adopted country than in the U.S.

KING OF HIS DOMAIN

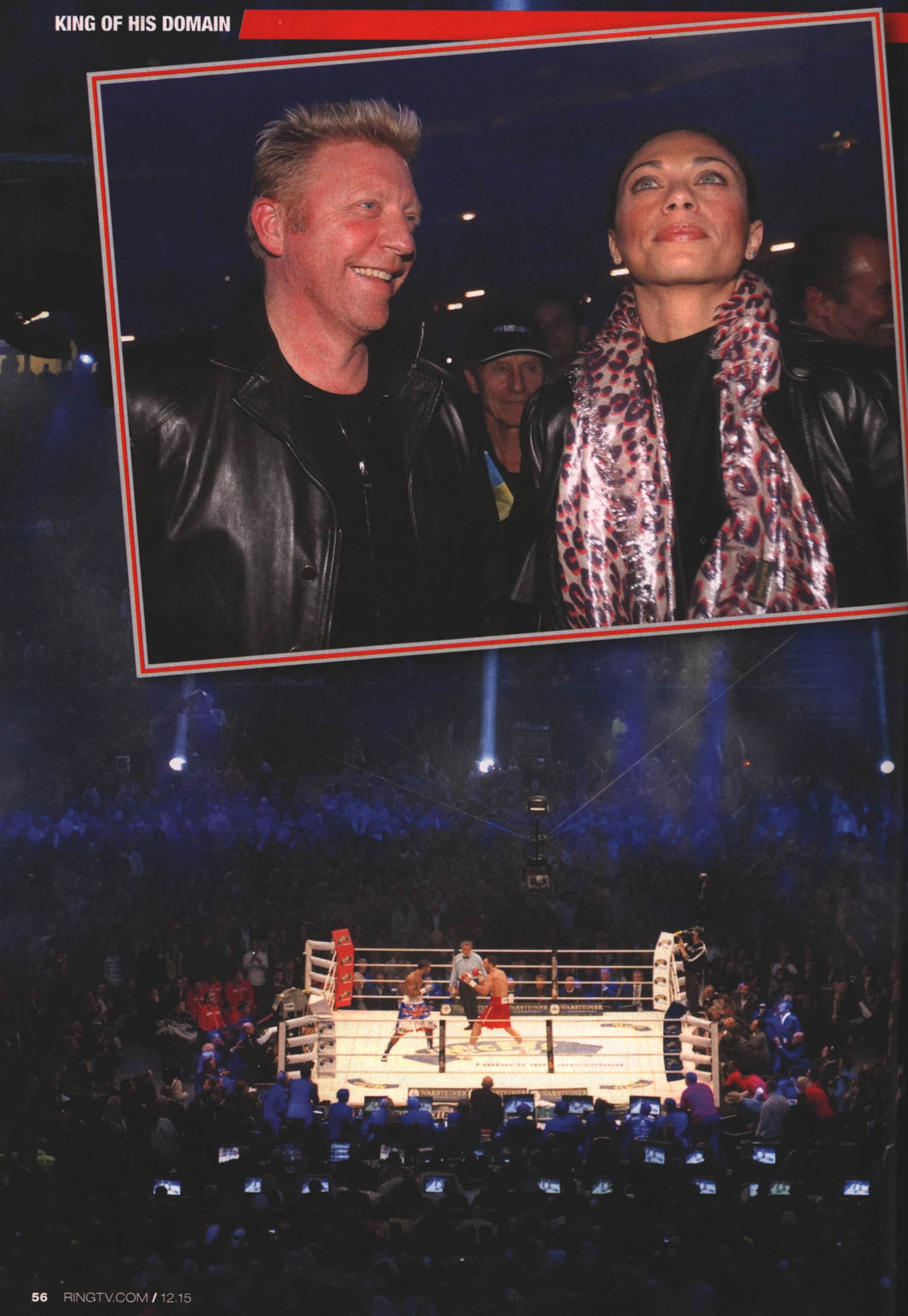
WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO HAS BECOME A PART OF MAINSTREAM CULTURE IN GERMANY

By **Elliot Worsell**

Much-maligned in some quarters, respected in others, Wladimir Klitschko's left jab is somewhat emblematic of his 19-year professional boxing career. Jab, jab, grab, so say the detractors. But, in truth, it's as consistent and mesmerizing as the putdowns are predictable. It's used to keep opponents at bay. It's used to reduce danger. It even eliminates the need to rely upon intangibles lesser fighters consider necessities.

Because of how dominating Wlad's jab has become – and thus how easy his fights have become – the punch has, in a roundabout way, been used to fend off not only challengers but

Klitschko's last fight was in New York because he fought an American, Bryant Jennings (right).



Klitschko brings out the stars (here Boris Becker and his wife, Lilly) in Germany.

also fans and critics, especially those across the Atlantic who have failed to warm to the Ukrainian despite his 9½-year reign as world heavyweight champion.

Back in his adopted Germany, however, Wlad's all-around style is viewed much like a Bach concerto. It is studied and adored. Its subtle nuances are a cause for celebration, not derision. Action is an afterthought to style. They want to see the style. The stylist. The composer.

"Wladimir has mastered the sweet science – hitting and not getting hit," said his longtime manager, Bernd Boente. "Some people respect and appreciate that, others don't. But boxing isn't just about knocking out the opponent. It's also about defense. That's the reason why he has reigned for so long.

"It's the same with someone like Lennox Lewis. He also learned the Emanuel Steward style. In Germany it's much more appreciated. But in the U.S. it's slightly different. They prefer guys like Arturo Gatti, who went in there with no defense at all and tried to knock out his opponent before he got knocked out. That's not really a style appreciated in most European countries."

So enamored with his style is the German public, in fact, some 50,000 fans are expected to descend on Dusseldorf's ESPRIT Arena on Oct. 24 to see Klitschko once again tame a challenger – this time Britain's Tyson Fury – behind his trusty left lead. It marks his seventh world-title fight at a football stadium.

"Wladimir can pretty much sell out any arena in Germany regardless of the opponent," said Tom Loeffler, managing director of K2 Promotions. "When you get into the soccer stadium matches, though – when you're looking at 50,000-plus tickets – that's when you need the high-profile matches.

"David Haye was a perfect example of that and it's the same with Tyson Fury. Ultimately, Wladimir's part of the mainstream culture in Germany. He's not just considered a boxer, he's considered a celebrity, so he doesn't take much selling."

One reason Klitschko has reached celebrity status in Germany is his association with television network RTL, which has broadcast Klitschko's fights live for a decade now. As far as exposure goes, it doesn't get much better. For example, some 15.5 million people (a market share of 67 percent) watched his 2011 unification title fight with David Haye and they didn't have to pay a dime for the privilege. Even lesser contests, against the likes Alex Leapai and Francesco Pianeta, registered numbers in the region of 8.2 million (39 percent) and 8.3 million (34 percent), respectively. That's damn good in an era where the heavyweight division is so shallow.

"He's able to sell fights on his own but, as you can see from the Haye fight, it helps when the fight features a good opponent who helps push the event," said RTL's press officer, Matthias Bolhofer. "The Leapai and Pianeta fights also had very good ratings and showed Wladimir alone can draw interest but you still need something special to get the really big numbers.

"He fights only two or three times maximum a year, so there's always anticipation whenever he fights, regardless of the opponent. He hasn't saturated the market. His fights are always highlights of the German sporting calendar."

Boente added: "All Klitschko fights in the last 15 years have sold out. We have a fantastic TV partner in RTL and they understand how to create a huge entertainment event. It's not just pure boxing like you often see in the U.S. It's a real entertainment show. We have a special concept for each fight and live performances from music acts. We also have VIP parties, a DJ, dancing and very good food and drink. The people are treated well. They get a complete evening of entertainment. It's a much better evening than people would get at a soccer game, for instance. It's more than just 90 minutes."

The Klitschko crowd is perhaps like no other in boxing. It's as tidy as the home hero's left jab. It too doesn't care for carnage.

"In Germany it's very quiet during the fight," Loeffler said. "The fans only really applaud when the round is over. In America you have people screaming and shouting the entire time. It's very different. Also, in Germany there's a higher level of dress code. You'll see more people wearing suits and ties and dresses. Boxing's considered a higher-class event than it is in the U.S."

Steven Jorgensen of Sport Bild, the German weekly sports magazine, has covered Klitschko since 1999. "The people that go to watch him fight do so because of the whole event," he said. "They watch Wladimir because he's a famous celebrity in Germany. It's less so because he's an exciting fighter.

"The crowd is also totally different to anything you'd see in the U.K. or the U.S. In the U.K. you get more of a football crowd dominated by males. In Germany, however, you get a lot of middle-aged couples. In fact, Rod Stewart is supposed to be performing the night of Klitschko-Fury and you'd probably get the exact same crowd at a Rod Stewart concert as you will at the fight.

"We probably have about 3 million hardcore boxing fans in Germany. Those are the ones who will watch a normal boxing show on television. The other 6, 7 or 8 million tuning in to watch Klitschko will be the type of people who'd watch a big concert or one of the mainstream comedians doing a stadium show. It's more about the event and the celebrity for them."

With an expected television audience of around 10 million it's plain to see why Klitschko, since embarking on his second reign as world heavyweight champion in 2006, has remained mostly in Europe and

plied his trade in America only three times.

Slowly but surely, though, as subsequent defenses racked up, public opinion came back around and earlier this year Klitschko re-emerged at a nearly sold-out Madison Square Garden to control the rudimental advances of unbeaten American Bryant Jennings over 12 rounds.

"Yes, there was a long gap in bringing him back but he sold over 17,000 tickets for the fight," Loeffler said. "... American television would naturally like to see Wladimir in a match against a top American heavyweight and that's why Jennings fit the bill. He was at the top of the ratings, he was unbeaten and he'd appeared on HBO a few times. As such, the fight made sense. But if there's a void, and a lack of top American heavyweights, it makes a lot more sense for Wladimir to fight in Germany and keep selling out arenas and stadiums."

Boente agrees. "The main reason we never had fights in America was that there were no really sell-able opponents for Wladimir," he said. "The best U.S. fighter for a long time was Tony Thompson and he wasn't popular enough to sell an event in America. A fight between him and Wladimir wouldn't work in a huge arena in America.

"Most of the time it makes more sense to fight in Europe because when we do a fight in America we lose a large portion of the license fee from RTL due to the event being shown in the middle of the night. The only reason the Jennings fight worked was because HBO really stepped up in a big way. It was a fight that interested them.

"America is known as the 'Mecca of Boxing' and Wladimir wants to fight there for that reason but often it just doesn't make business sense."

By way of perspective, Klitschko's MSG rumble with Jennings – screened live in Germany at five o'clock in the morning – was watched by 1.4 million people on RTL. This, compared to the

No Klitschko fight on the RTL network has topped the 1995 Axel Schulz (left)-Francois Botha fight in terms of ratings.

SEA CHANGE

Wladimir Klitschko does very good ratings on German television. However, not even the heavyweight champion performs at the level of his immediate predecessors in terms of percentage of viewers. Matthias Bolhofer, spokesman for the German network RTL, explains how the TV landscape has shifted in recent years:

"Klitschko is the biggest draw this century but in the '90s we had even higher ratings with the likes of Axel Schulz and Henry Maske. They performed even better. The best rating we ever got was 18 million for Axel Schulz's fight against Francois Botha. That was the best performance RTL has ever had, including all of its programming.

"In the '90s the TV landscape was very different, of course. There were less options and only a few channels. There were perhaps only six or seven broadcasters, whereas now we have hundreds. To put it into context, other top German-based fighters like Juergen Braehmer or Marco Huck will attract numbers in the region of 3 million."

9.1 million people who watched his previous fight against Kubrat Pulev in primetime, goes some way to explaining why there's no great desire to chase the American Dream. The numbers simply don't add up.

"We're interested in ratings and primetime Saturday night is important to us," said Bolhofer, referring to fights on RTL. "The Jennings fight was our fourth Klitschko fight in America – Wladimir with three and Vitali with one – and we accept that it's a part of being a champion. It's not our preference to have him fight in America but he's a world heavyweight champion so he will fight all over the world."

"Interestingly, more people watched the Sultan Ibragimov fight than the Bryant Jennings fight," said Jorgensen, referring to the 2.2 million Germans who tuned in to RTL to watch Klitschko-Ibragimov at Madison Square Garden in 2008. "In terms of Klitschko fights in America, though, the high watermark will always be Vitali's fight against Lennox Lewis in 2003, which was watched in the middle of the night by 4.6 million people for a market share of 83 percent. But that's Lennox Lewis. Most of the challengers Wladimir has fought in recent years are relatively unknown in the eyes of the German public."

"Lennox's fights with Tyson and Holyfield had been pay-per-view events over here, so he was very well-known. He was also the world heavyweight champion, of course. Most of the opponents Wladimir has fought in recent years are relatively unknown in the eyes of the German public."

Hope, however, exists in the form of America's new WBC world heavyweight champion, Deontay Wilder. He, more than anyone else during Klitschko's reign, seems to carry the right amount of style, sass and substance to make a voyage across the Atlantic worthwhile.

German promoters emphasize entertainment during their boxing cards. Singer Jan Delay performed before Klitschko fought Kubrat Pulev.

"The only good heavyweight in the U.S. is Deontay Wilder," said Boente. "All the other top heavyweights are from Europe. In fact, I was looking at the Top 10 in the latest issue of THE RING and realized that Wladimir has beaten five of them. Hopefully Tyson Fury will be No. 6."

"Deontay Wilder is probably the best example of the type of opponent Wladimir would need if he's to fight again in the U.S. anytime soon," Loeffler said. "Wilder has got Vitali's old belt and having a unification fight with an unbeaten American would be a dream come true for Wladimir. From a marketability standpoint, Wladimir couldn't have been happier to see Wilder claim that WBC title."

One senses the rise of Wilder is timely for Klitschko, if only because, at 39 years of age, it gives him justifiable reason to carry on. After all, there are only so many times he can masterfully shut down challengers in front of sold-out European crowds.

"A lot of hardcore German boxing fans wouldn't mind seeing Klitschko lose because at least then something interesting and dramatic would have happened," Jorgensen said. "The problem Wladimir has is that his fights have become very predictable. The interest in his fights has leveled out a bit. His fights, when announced, are just seen as one-sided beat-downs and most of them turn out that way.

"If you look at the RTL ratings, they are still strong but the market share is going down. It's getting tougher to get over a 55 percent market share. The last four or five fights have seen him drop below 40 percent."

At an age when most fighters are past their prime, slowing down and battling Father Time, being brilliantly predictable and seemingly invincible doesn't sound too bad, does it? Nearly ten years into his current reign, Wladimir Klitschko is still watched by millions, still the world heavyweight champion and still one hell of a powerful force – both inside and outside the ring.

BALANC
OF

Gennady Golovkin (top right) and David Lemieux have the right formula to put serious hurt on their opponents.

Gennady Golovkin looks nothing like one of the most punishing punchers in boxing. Away from a boxing ring, the mild-mannered middleweight champion more resembles a harmless tourist. Always smiling. Impossibly polite. Unsure of what to say or how to say it. »

E POWER

BIG PUNCHERS LIKE **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** AND **DAVID LEMIEUX** COMBINE INNATE GIFTS WITH PROPER TECHNIQUE TO PUT OPPONENTS TO SLEEP

By **Keith Idec**

When the bell rings, however, Golovkin is proof positive that appearances can be very deceiving. That's when it becomes immediately obvious he shares something special with the most menacing fighters in history, monsters like Jack Dempsey, Thomas Hearns, Joe Louis and Mike Tyson. The undefeated Golovkin is a pure puncher, which would account for his 30 knockouts in 33 fights – including 20 straight since November 2008.

David Lemieux will face Golovkin on Oct. 17 at Madison Square Garden in New York. And he'll bring with him the same unusual ability to end fights early and instantly. Like Golovkin, Lemieux owns one of boxing's highest knockout ratios. He has lost twice but has knocked out 31 of his 36 opponents (86 percent), a slightly lower percentage than Golovkin (91 percent).

This showdown between two of boxing's most powerful knockout artists begs the question: What makes a puncher a puncher?

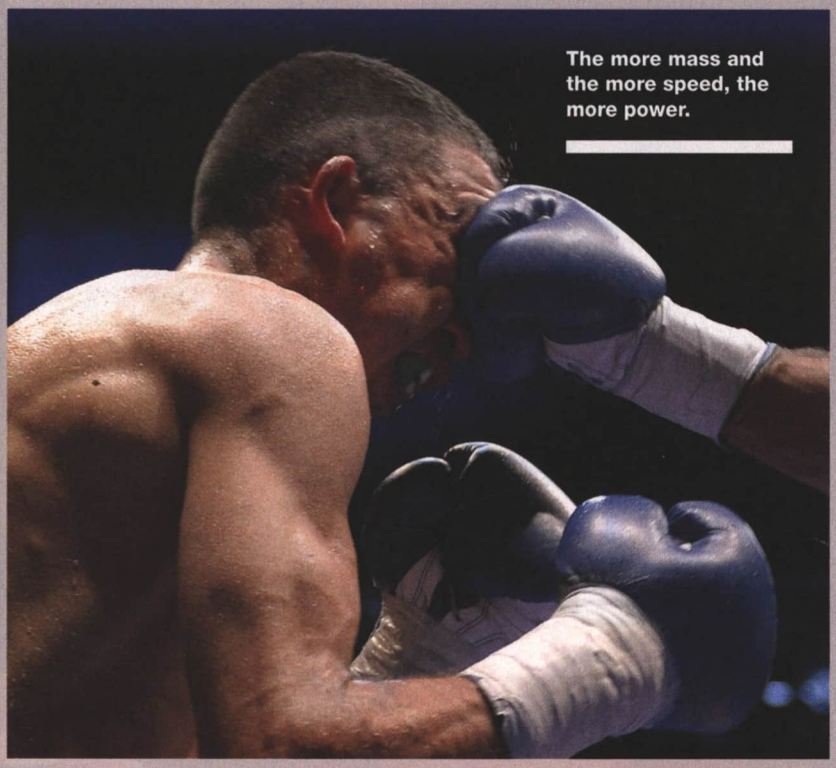
It isn't an easy equation to explain.

Some of the most muscular fighters – welterweight Timothy Bradley and heavyweight Steve Cunningham come to mind – don't produce knockouts anywhere near the rate at which their perfectly sculpted physiques suggest they should.

The buffed Bradley has tried countless unconventional exercises to improve his power. None of his attempts have produced real results. The two-division champion has just 12 knockouts in 34 fights (35 percent) and has won only one of his 15 bouts over the past eight years by knockout.

The chiseled Cunningham has knocked out a mere 36 percent of his opponents – 13 of 36 – and only one in eight fights since moving up to heavyweight three years ago. The former cruiserweight champion

Muscle mass and punching power aren't necessarily connected, as evidenced by Tim Bradley.



The more mass and the more speed, the more power.

PROPERTIES OF POWER By Keith Idec

How can the science behind a punch's power be explained in terms a layman will understand? John Eric Goff, a professor of physics at Lynchburg (Virginia) College and author of "Gold Medal Physics: The Science of Sports," offered this answer:

"Before throwing a punch, a boxer typically has his guard up, meaning his arms are bent and his gloves are near his face. He is storing energy in his body, much like a compressed spring stores energy. Part of that potential energy will be converted to energy of motion, called kinetic energy, when he punches (the compressed spring is released). The more mass, i.e. heavier arm and hand, the more kinetic energy. The more speed, the more kinetic energy, too. But more mass is harder to move compared to less mass so there is a tradeoff. Kinetic energy grows like the speed squared, meaning doubling the speed actually quadruples the kinetic energy. Speed is critical for a hard punch.

"Now imagine throwing a punch. The hand obviously starts at zero speed. When the arm is fully extended, the hand has to be at zero speed once again. Otherwise, it would keep going. Somewhere in the middle of those two zero-speed points is where the hand has its maximum speed, meaning its maximum kinetic energy. You thus see a really hard punch delivered while a boxer's arm is partially bent.

"Greater punch speed also gives the boxer's hand more momentum. The idea when making contact is to transfer that momentum to the other boxer, so that the other boxer's head or body moves back with a lot of momentum. The boxer can increase momentum by leaning or moving into the punch. By moving his center of mass forward, he effectively throws more of himself into the punch. It's like a baseball pitcher pushing off the rubber toward home plate while throwing." ★

usually weighs much less than his heavyweight adversaries but he wasn't considered a powerful puncher when he boxed beneath the 200-pound limit, either.

Meanwhile, undefeated Sergey Kovalev, a fighter who doesn't have much muscle definition, is the light heavyweight division's version of Golovkin. The ruthless Russian has won 86 percent of his bouts by knockout (28-0-1, 25 KOs) and has gone past eight rounds just once during his six-year pro career.

Two weight classes higher, heavyweight Deontay Wilder typically packs only 225 pounds on his 6-foot-7 frame and has very thin legs. That hasn't stopped him from knocking out his first 32 professional foes before beating Bermane Stiverne by unanimous decision to win the WBC title on Jan. 17 in Las Vegas.

The most time-honored explanation, the theory to which many trainers and fighters still subscribe, is that you're either born with power or you're not.

"I think punchers are born," said Ronnie Shields, who has worked with the likes of Tyson and David Tua. "I don't think you can make a puncher. Either a guy has it or he doesn't. You can't make a guy stronger, where he just hits a guy and knocks him out. I've never seen it. I've worked with a lot of good guys and either they had the punch or they didn't.

"People can lift weights and you can do all of that stuff. That doesn't make you a puncher. That doesn't make you any stronger. You've got to already have it in order for you to be a puncher. Now, you can probably do things to work on your balance to set it up where you use your body more. But a puncher has to be born with it. You can't make a puncher."

Most of Shields' fellow trainers agree that pure punchers indeed need genetic gifts. Some of them contend, however, that tweaking techniques and making other adjustments can develop a fighter with at least some power into a better puncher.

"Punchers are born with a snap in their punch," said Abel Sanchez,

Golovkin's trainer. "They're born with strength. But you can develop a little better punch by improving your technique, your balance, your timing, by making sure you're committing to your punches. A lot of the big punchers that you see, they commit to their punches. Their body is fully committed.

"A lot of the fighters that are great boxers, you see them use more of the amateur style, where they're pulling back as they're throwing their shots. Their center of balance is in the center of their body, so they're not really committing completely. Some of the bigger punchers, they're getting full extension on everything that they throw. So those are going to be the guys that, with technique, with balance and with timing, they're going to be better punchers. You can make them better punchers."

The evolution of one of the most pulverizing punchers in the sport's history supports Sanchez's theory.

Hearns was tall and lean, the complete opposite of his compact middleweight nemesis, Marvin Hagler. "Hitman" had the body type of a Pistons point guard but he hit like Louis and captivated mainstream sports fans like no fighter from Detroit had since the "Brown Bomber."

Hearns knocked out 30 of his first 32 opponents on his way to winning the WBA welterweight title in August 1980, the year before he was stopped by Sugar Ray Leonard in one of the biggest fights of the 20th century. As easy as a young Hearns made it look both before and after Leonard defeated him, his late trainer, Emanuel Steward, didn't consider his first star fighter a born puncher.

"I taught Tommy," Steward told THE RING in 2012. "I showed him how to shift his weight and lock up on his wrist. He was a learned puncher, not a natural."

John Eric Goff, a professor of physics at Lynchburg (Virginia) College, believes there's validity to what Shields, Sanchez and Steward said.

Producing power comes naturally to some boxers but Goff also is certain that increasing core and leg strength and learning to torque and rotate the core to generate more speed could make a fighter a harder puncher. The operative word, of course, is "could."

"I don't doubt that some people are born with a genetic predisposition to be better athletes than other people," said Goff, author of "Gold Medal Physics: The Science of Sports." "We're not all tall enough to play basketball and some people won't grow enough to fight in the heavyweight division. But proper technique is very important to be able to punch hard. Trainers and boxers have surely honed their craft over many years through much trial and error.

"What works really well is naturally going to be something physics could explain. Boxers know that a jab is a quick punch more than a power punch. It stuns an opponent and sets him up for the more powerful back-hand punch. But physics can tell that the jab doesn't have the hip torque and distance covered that the back-hand punch has. The back hand can be pushed by the body over a longer distance, giving it more speed. I believe anyone

Tall, lean Thomas Hearns became a fearsome puncher with technique, balance and timing.

can be taught proper technique. Whether that technique can be put into practice is another matter."

Mark Puttenvink, a former strength and conditioning coach for the New York Rangers, has worked with numerous boxers in New Jersey and New York over the past decade. He assesses three things when attempting to improve a boxer's power: body structure, technique and neural firing mechanisms.

Puttenvink explained that long-limbed fighters such as Hearns have long leverage points, which, combined with proper technique, lead to explosive power. Tyson, Puttenvink added, was able to deliver devastating power because he had incredible leg strength and was able to stay low and then explode upward. Golovkin, according to Puttenvink, is an extremely effective puncher because he really sits on his punches, rotates and gets excellent extension on his shots.

Once Puttenvink has assessed a boxer's body structure and technique, he trains that fighter in an explosive manner. The goal is to decrease the percentage of low-threshold motor units, which activate slow muscle contractions for low levels of force, in favor of high-threshold motor units, which produce quicker and more intense contractions and thus generate more power.

In certain cases, it seems that no matter how hard a fighter works to improve his technique or to become more powerful, he can't do it. For all his success at the elite level, Bradley is a perfect example of strength training and technique tweaks not producing power.

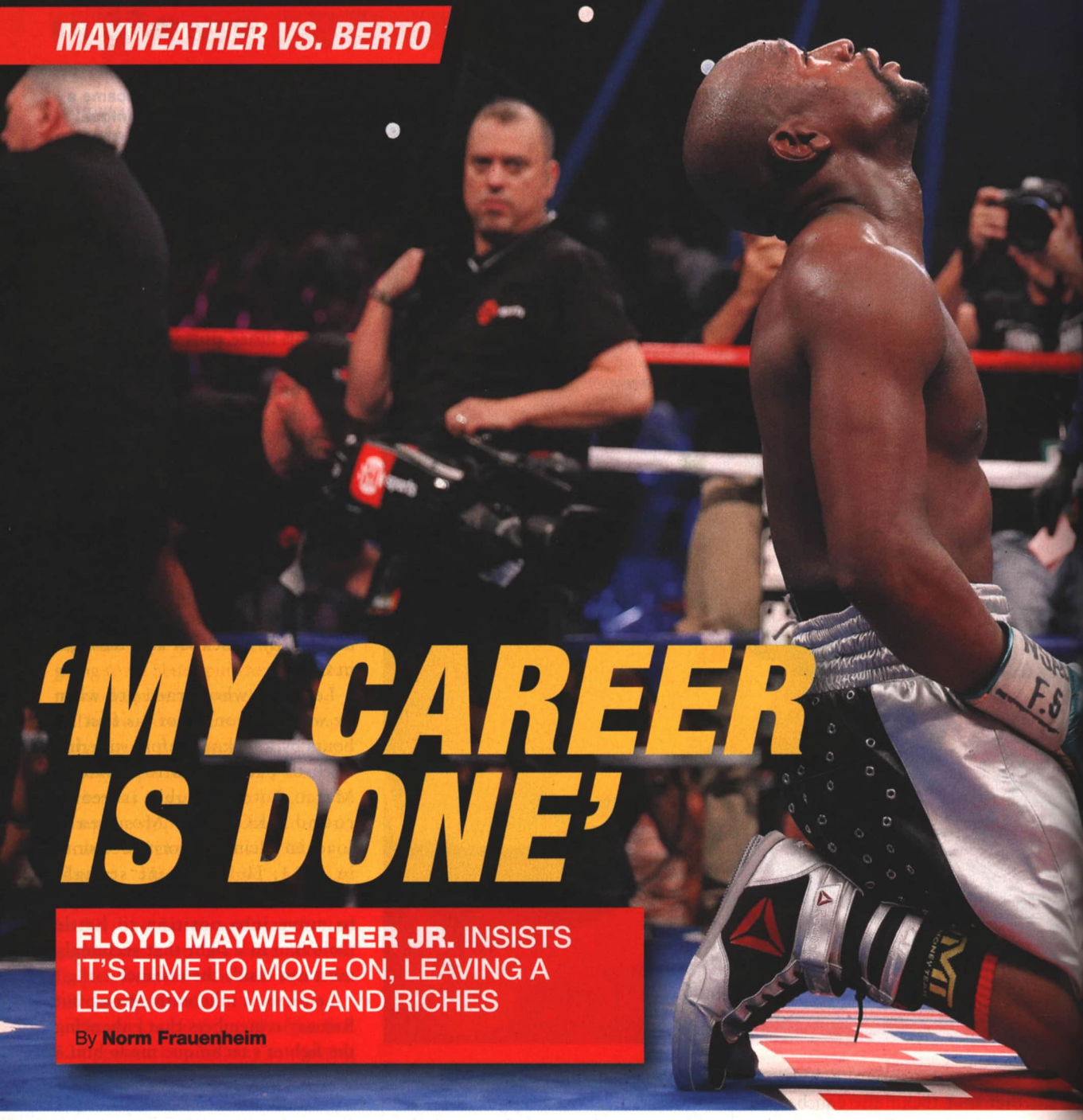
For others, Lemieux among them, punching hard comes naturally more than anything. Marc Ramsay, Lemieux's trainer, knew the 26-year-old champion would be "an animal" at the professional level when he won one amateur match after another by knockout as a teenager in Quebec.

Lemieux, who turned pro when he was 18, won 24 of his first 25 bouts by knockout before suffering back-to-back losses to Mexico's Marco Antonio Rubio (seventh-round TKO) and Montreal's Joachim Alcine (majority decision) in 2011. He won nine straight thereafter, seven by knockout, to move into position to battle Golovkin in a fight that seemingly must end inside the distance.

Lemieux is inherently strong but Ramsay remembers that enhancing the fighter's technique made him a more dangerous fighter.

"I think it's a mix of a couple pieces of a puzzle," Ramsay said. "First of all, you need something genetic, for sure. Also it's about technique, applying perfect technique. I know some fighters who are skinny, but they are able to develop a lot of good snapping, good technique to apply power. When you put everything together, you have guys who hit like Triple-G and David do." RING

Keith Idec covers boxing for The Record, of Woodland Park, N.J. He can be reached on Twitter @ Idecboxing.



'MY CAREER IS DONE'

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. INSISTS IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON, LEAVING A LEGACY OF WINS AND RICHES

By **Norm Frauenheim**

LAS VEGAS – Floyd Mayweather Jr. was on his knees. One green-gloved hand was pointed at the MGM Grand Garden Arena's ceiling. He looked skyward. Looking to say thanks? Looking for direction? Looking for some divine power to tell him what the hell he's going to do next?

Mayweather didn't say exactly what was he looking for during his private moment in a very public place in the immediate aftermath of a one-sided decision over Andre Berto in what he vowed was the last bout in his 49-0 career.

"My career is done," he said before and after.

That was his refrain throughout the bout's buildup and again during a long, rambling post-fight news conference that started on a Saturday night and ended on a Sunday morning.

But nothing that Mayweather said, again and again, ended the skeptical questions about all those reasons to come back. He could surpass Rocky Marciano's milestone record. Fifty-and-0 has a nice ring to it. He could collect a lot more money. He could stay in the public limelight. The words were different, but the questions were always the same: Come on, Floyd, why not one more?

Like the questions, Mayweather used different words for each answer. Yes, he said, he's been offered "nine figures" to fight again. But he suggested he is beyond the currency that has defined him as much as his unbeaten legacy.

"Money doesn't make me, I make money," said Mayweather, who made an estimated $300 million in 2015.

Above all, Mayweather's 120-

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Andre Berto fight occurred after the deadline to have this issue of THE RING to the printer but we were given an extension because of the magnitude of the fight. A more detailed report will be in the January 2016 issue.*

Floyd Mayweather Jr. took a moment to reflect after outpointing Andre Berto to close out his career.

108, 117-111, 118-110 victory over Berto reflected a weariness about the questions and the controversies that follow him. The Berto bout was preceded by a report that he had had a banned IV after the weigh-in on the eve of his victory over Manny Pacquiao. Before victories over Marcos Maidana, there was an 11th-hour controversy about gloves and explosive headlines about his history of domestic abuse.

Increasingly, Mayweather fights have been more about what is said and not said outside of the ropes instead what happens within them. In his post-Berto news conference, Mayweather almost sounded as if he was relieved he wouldn't have to deal with all of that anymore.

"When I was younger, I wanted to be famous," he said. "But I'm older, more mature now."

It's a comment that reflects a feeling shared by media and fans. Call it Floyd Fatigue.

Maybe he'll have a change of heart and come back for a 50th fight for the grand opening of a new arena across the Strip from the MGM Grand.

Maybe, maybe. There are as many maybes as there is cash in Money May's future these days. There's reasonable skepticism about whether he can really retire from the spotlight, the bully pulpit, that an active boxing career provides him. After all, that's what sustains a healthy ego. For now, however, it sounds as if he wants to try. He said he would consult with adviser Al Haymon and work with the fighters he promotes.

"It's time for a young fighter to step up and hopefully break my record," he said.

If there's a true TBE (The Best Ever) on his resume, he seems to concede that it's the money. Maybe some young fighter in his gym can go 49-0. But can anyone ever earn the estimated $800 million he collected over 19 years as the top of the sport?

"I tell the truth," Mayweather said. "Do I think there's ever going to be a fighter who makes this much in one fight? That's going to be tough, I tell them that. But I also tell them they can make a pretty good amount."

No matter what's next, he, too, will continue to make a pretty good amount. His six-fight deal with Showtime is over. Yet, his relationship with the CBS subsidiary looks to be as strong as ever.

Showtime executive Stephen Espinoza said he has talked about doing a reality series with Mayweather. There's also ringside commentary. Mayweather Promotions CEO Leonard Ellerbe said Mayweather has been approached by Hollywood. He has three film offers, Ellerbe said. We're guessing a romantic comedy with Ronda Rousey isn't one of them. But a role in show biz is an option.

After all, Mayweather has already had a lifetime full of roles.

ROLE PLAYING

TONY BELLEW IS THRILLED TO HAVE HAD A PART IN THE NEW 'ROCKY' FILM, 'CREED'

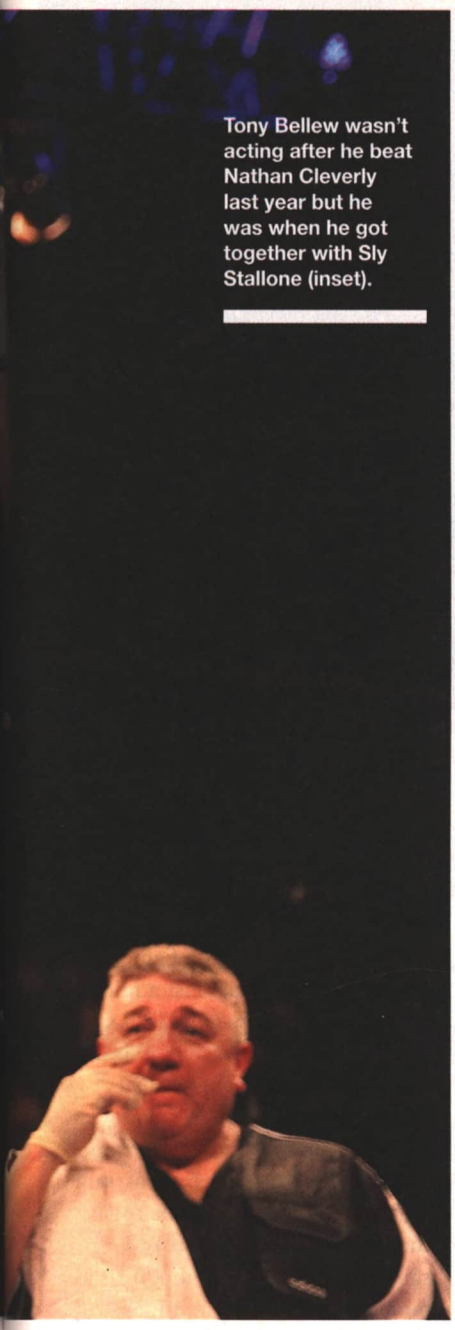
By **Gareth A Davies**

Cruiserweight Tony Bellew was convinced he was being punked by pals when he was approached to be in "Creed," the seventh film in the "Rocky" series. Bellew was on his way home after watching his beloved Everton Football Club lose to Chelsea, 6-3.

"I walked out heartbroken," he said. "Then my phone rang. I remember the exact time because it was the last time I could have a takeaway before facing Nathan Cleverly. This was the biggest fight of my life and if I lost it, I was going to retire. That was how much it meant to me.

"This guy says, 'I'm calling you on behalf of MGM, Sylvester Stallone and Kevin King Templeton.' I said, 'Are you having a f---ing laugh?' I only listened to him because I thought it would cheer me up. He phoned me back four times in the next hour. When I told my wife, Rachael, she looked at me like I was mad."

Yet the rest is history. Bellew spent three months filming the movie in Philadelphia. It's due out in November, with Bellew and others having said that director Ryan Coogler may just have created something a little special.



Tony Bellew wasn't acting after he beat Nathan Cleverly last year but he was when he got together with Sly Stallone (inset).

"Ryan wanted a boxer for the movie, not an actor, for the part I play, 'Pretty' Ricky Conlan. I've been paid more for fights than I got for this," Bellew told me as we sat on the steps of the majestic St George's Hall in Liverpool, soaked in summer sunshine.

"What it's done is given me an opportunity. That was the reason why I took it."

Working with Stallone, he told me, was special. "It was nice being around Sly. He always gave me great words of advice. The best bit of advice he gave me was basically to visualize someone else's face on Michael B. Jordan's (who plays Adonis Creed) body. So it was Nathan Cleverly's face on Mike's body."

No surprise there.

"Sometimes I'd pinch myself," Bellew said. "Sly took me out for a meal one night and we talked. He said Dolph Lundgren punched him in the rib one time during 'Rocky (IV)' and he punched him so hard it pierced his lung. He was in hospital in the intensive care unit. There were so many things. He'd sparred with the likes of Joe Frazier. He got in the ring with Larry Holmes and sparred with Roberto Duran."

Bellew was also impressed by Andre Ward, who is in the movie.

"He has got to be one of the most respectful men I've ever met," he said. "He's a gentleman. Not to mention the kid's a special, special fighter. We stayed away from talking about our own personal careers but the first thing he said to me when we met was, 'Listen, I've got major respect for you because you'll fight anybody.' That meant the world to me."

When it comes to Bellew's boxing career, his hunger to win a world title is undiminished. "I never dreamed of an ABA title (U.K. amateur championship, which Bellew won three times), but the more I've won, the more hungry I've got and the harder I train," he said. "I don't claim to be the best boxer in the world. What I claim to do is give 100 percent when I get in that ring. I just believe I can win a world title. The one place in the world where I can feel like I'm completely in control, at home, is in a ring.

"I love the walk to the ring, the crowd, the landing of a punch. I sometimes don't mind taking a punch to wake me up. I don't believe I chose boxing, boxing chose me."

Just as Rocky himself might have said. And that's what Bellew is – a real-life Rocky story.

BILLY WALKER

British heavyweight Billy Walker belonged to a different era but it is refreshing to see a man with his mind and his money intact in his eighth decade. Walker didn't hang around too long in boxing, retiring at 30 in 1969 with a record of 21-8-2 (16 knockouts).

One of the most popular heavyweights of the '60s, he never won a title but sold out what today is Wembley Arena nine times on account of his winning smile, ability to knock out opponents and to get up after he had been knocked down himself.

Today, between homes in Jersey – a rich man's haven here on this side of The Pond – and a penthouse apartment overlooking the Thames in Battersea, Walker surveys boxing. His era and the present day.

Walker explained that his name was in lights almost overnight in 1961 when he knocked out American Cornelius Perry in an amateur international tournament broadcast on national TV in the U.K. Suddenly, promoters were competing to sign Walker to lucrative contracts. The media started calling him "The Golden

TOP 15 (as of Sept. 6)

1. **AMIR KHAN**
2. **KELL BROOK**
3. **LEE SELBY**
4. **CARL FRAMPTON**
5. **JAMES DEGALE**
6. **SCOTT QUIGG**
7. **TYSON FURY**
8. **GEORGE GROVES**
9. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
10. **MARTIN MURRAY**

11-15: Billy Joe Saunders, Tony Bellew, Callum Smith, Kevin Mitchell, Terry Flanagan

Life is good these days for former heavyweight Billy Walker, showing off the view from his home on the Thames.

Boy" and "The Blond Bomber."

"I had a very lucky experience as an amateur," he said. "America came over and Great Britain beat them 10-0. I ended up fighting this heavyweight, Perry, who was about 6-5 and 18-odd stone (252-plus pounds). Today that doesn't sound very big but I was only 13½ (stone, 189 pounds) at the time. It must've been luck because I threw a left hook and caught him on the chin and knocked him out. I became a household name after that. It was on live TV and it was in the papers. Everybody started to follow me after that. It was quite fun."

The main promoters at the time – Jack Solomon and Harry Levine – immediately offered him good money to turn professional.

"I didn't really want to box," he said. "My brother, George, had boxed for the title at light heavyweight. He won the amateur ABAs in 1951 and then he fought for the British title as a light heavyweight in 1954. He lost. He came home and I remember looking at his eyes. He had a big cut over one eye and the other was bruised. His lips were bruised. I thought, 'Never, not me.'"

Walker was born in Stepney in 1939 but grew up in the East End of London. "In 1941 this nasty person with a mustache came over and bombed us out. We had to go and live in Bedford during the war." His father was a drayman for a local brewery.

"The promoters knew I was a crowd-pleaser at the time," he said. "When I got put down, I'd get up again. A lot of them today don't get up. They don't want to get up. People said to me, 'Even if you lost, you always gave fantastic value for money.'"

He invested his money well. At one time, Walker had half a dozen restaurants called Billy's Baked Potatoes, two at Tower Bridge, two in Piccadilly, one in Holborn and one in Chancery Lane. "We bought a business with 9,000 (pounds) I earned for one fight. You could buy a house for 3,000 then. I bought the first garage with my brother. We were partners. We had a house with it and a yard and garage pumps."

Walker, who had an eye for property too, quickly became a celebrity in London in the 'swinging '60s.' There were beautiful models, endless party invites. Even a night out in Cannes with Joan Collins, he confirmed to me with a wink before giving a beaming grin to his fourth wife, Susan, a beautiful woman with whom he shares all his time now.

He and Muhammad Ali might have fought. "I only met Ali once, at the Mayfair Hotel," he said. "He came down to the bar and went into his act. He then sat down and started talking. All of a sudden he said to me, 'Listen, you beat Henry Cooper and then they'll get us a fight. Good looking black guy against a fairly good-looking white guy. We'll make a fortune.' He made me laugh. It didn't happen, though. I fought Henry Cooper and got beat on a cut eye.

"We as heavyweights were much smaller then but it was a great time," Walker continued. "Maybe today they take it all too seriously. I always said I'd give up booze and birds a month before a fight and I never did. I lost quite a few times but it didn't matter. You go back and challenge them again. Today they have a fight and then don't fight again for four or five months.

"I like a violent fight, a knockout. I don't want technical stuff. I don't want jab, jab, jab. I want to see them fighting. People haven't changed in 3,000 years. They like to see people fight. Maybe it was more cruel in those days but nothing's changed." RING

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

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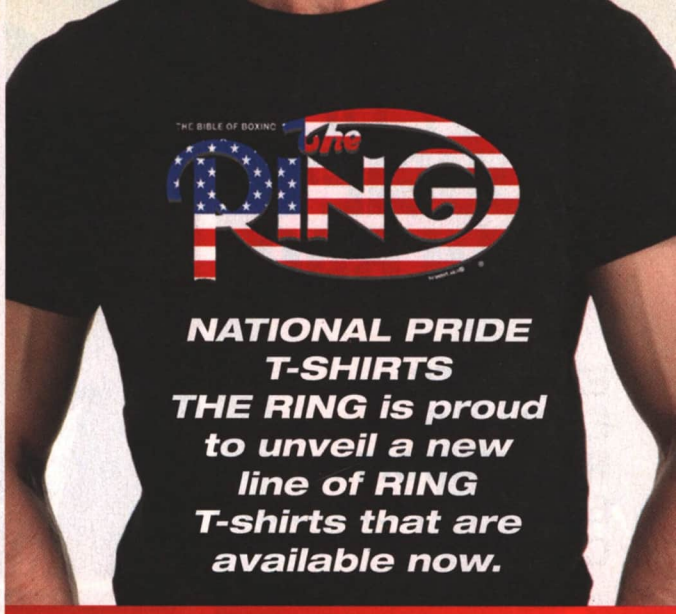

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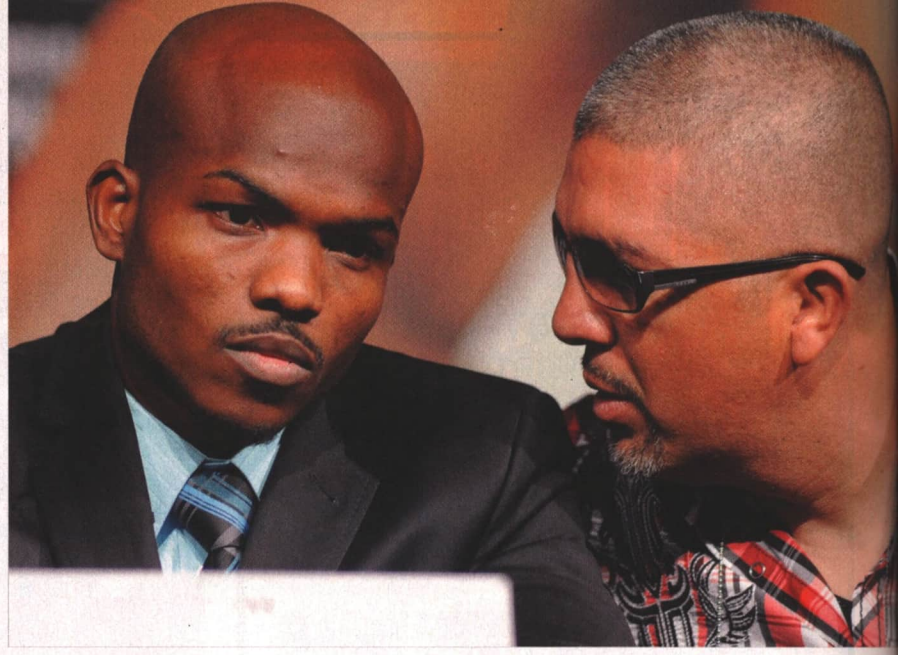
BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

By **Doug Fischer**



Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

The following excerpts are from the Aug. 28, Sept. 4 and Sept. 7, 2015, editions of the Monday and Friday Mailbags.

M. MORGAN, from Texas, asked Fischer for his opinion on Tim Bradley's split from longtime trainer Joel Diaz. Morgan thinks it was the right move from the veteran, who he believes has stagnated in terms of development in recent years. He was also put off by fan criticism of Bradley (on social media) and pointed out that such trainer-boxer breakups are part of boxing.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I agree that trainer-athlete splits after longtime partnerships are part of sports (amateur and pro, at every level). It's extremely rare for a professional fighter to be with the same trainer or co-trainers for his entire career these days. I hate to say it but diehard loyalty like Marvin Hagler's connection to the Petronelli brothers is a thing of the past.

To be honest, I was surprised by the attention the Bradley-Diaz split attracted on social media. I don't really have a strong opinion on it and I certainly don't feel the need to pick a side. I think they had an excellent run together. They both overachieved in many ways and beat the odds numerous times. They also made some very good paydays.

I wish Bradley luck in finding a new trainer, one who can take him to the next level if he hasn't already plateaued. I wish Diaz luck with his young stable, which includes lightweight standout Diego Magdaleno and unbeaten featherweight prospect Diego De La Hoya. I have no doubt that Joel will be working with three or four world titleholders within a few years.

And I have no doubt that Bradley will be in a few more memorable, high-profile fights/events before he hangs up his gloves, regardless of who is in his corner.

TAKU, from Japan, proposed a mythical matchup – Kostya Tszyu vs. Pernell Whitaker at 140 pounds – and asked Fischer if any boxing style could get the better of Whitaker when he was at his best. Said Taku: "Tszyu was a nightmare for boxers who like to fight from a distance but could he beat Sweet Pea? (I think he could.) If not, what kind of fighter can beat the best version of Whitaker? Perhaps only Duran or Hearns?"

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I think Tszyu-Whitaker at 140 pounds is a toss-up. It could've come down to the judges but I'm going to go with Tszyu because I think the sharpshooting Russian would hurt and maybe drop Sweet Pea at some point. Plus, I think Tszyu would tie up Whitaker when in close and use grappling/roughhouse tactics to throw the American master off rhythm and wear him down. Now, if the fight was officiated by a ref who didn't tolerate the rough stuff Kostya occasionally used, perhaps Whitaker could beat him to the punch from the outside, make him miss and outmaneuver him for 12 rounds. But I think it was very hard to do that with Tszyu, whose unique style and strengths always seemed to trouble stylists.

I always had a lot of respect for Whitaker, because the slickster was truly fearless and always sought to challenge himself but I never viewed him as unbeatable. I think Duran would have beaten him at lightweight, junior welter and welterweight. And I would certainly favor dynamic (and naturally bigger) boxer-punchers like Leonard and Hearns to beat the natural lightweight. Those three ATGs had world-class power and physical strength to go with their elite-level skill, technique and ring generalship.

RICHARD, from the U.K., asked Fischer if he has seen or witnessed live any

Doug Fischer writes that fighter-trainer splits, like that of Tim Bradley (left) and Joel Diaz, are just a part of boxing.

of Shannon Briggs' bizarre "Let's Go Champ" campaign to get a shot at RING heavyweight champ Wladimir Klitschko. Richard said he finds it "both hilarious" and "appalling" and wondered if Fischer has seen anything similar to what Briggs is doing.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: Like you and other boxing fans, I've been following Briggs' #LetsGoChamp campaign on YouTube and social media with a strange mix of amusement, admiration, embarrassment and disgust. I haven't witnessed any of it live and in person. I don't know how I would react, to be quite honest. I think I'd worry about Briggs. He seems too worked up at times. I know he's a big ham and that he's acting and putting on a show but I wouldn't be shocked if he suffered a terrible asthma attack, heart attack or stroke during one of his rants. (Shannon's probably gonna slap me that next time he sees me for writing that.)

You asked if I'd ever seen anything similar to Shannon's #LetsGoChamp campaign. The answer is yes. One fighter publicly hounding another fighter (usually a champion and often a more popular figure) for a big fight is nothing new. When Muhammad Ali, then known as Cassius Clay, was a young up-and-comer he lobbied to fight Sonny Liston by following the heavyweight champ around Las Vegas with his entourage. Ali had his own tour bus full of camp members and fans that he once parked in front of Liston's Las Vegas home. Ali "called out" Liston from a bullhorn until the feared champ stormed out of his house in a rage, chucking rocks at the bus until it drove off his property.

During my time as a boxing writer, I've witnessed Fernando Vargas stalk and taunt Oscar De La Hoya in much the same way. Long before they finally settled their beef in the ring in 2002, Vargas and his "Ferocious Squad" used to crash De La Hoya's public appearances around Southern California (sometimes pelting the poor Golden Boy with eggs).

Before Antonio Tarver got his deserved shot at Roy Jones Jr., the Magic Man used to invade his fellow Floridian's press conferences to repeatedly throw down the gauntlet. Tarver wasn't as theatrical as Ali, Briggs or Vargas but he was more articulate (and sometimes very funny) in the way he challenged his fellow Olympic medalist and he seemed to get under Jones' skin (which sparked lively macho talk-back from the pound-for-pound king).

BRYCE, from Chicago, asked Fischer to name the greatest fighter of each decade since 1900.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I can't recall if I've done this before or not but here goes:

1900s – JOE GANS
Runners up: Jack Johnson, Abe Attell

1910s – SAM LANGFORD
Runners up: Benny Leonard, Jimmy Wilde

1920s – HARRY GREB
Runners up: Gene Tunney, Mickey Walker

1930s – HENRY ARMSTRONG
Runners up: Billy Conn, Tony Canzoneri

1940s – SUGAR RAY ROBINSON
Runners up: Willie Pep, Ezzard Charles

1950s – ROBINSON
Runners up: Rocky Marciano, Archie Moore

1960s – CARLOS ORTIZ
Runners up: Eder Jofre, Emile Griffith

1970s – MUHAMMAD ALI
Runners up: Roberto Duran, Carlos Monzon

1980s – SUGAR RAY LEONARD
Runners up: Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns

1990s – PERNELL WHITAKER
Runners up: Oscar De La Hoya, Roy Jones Jr.

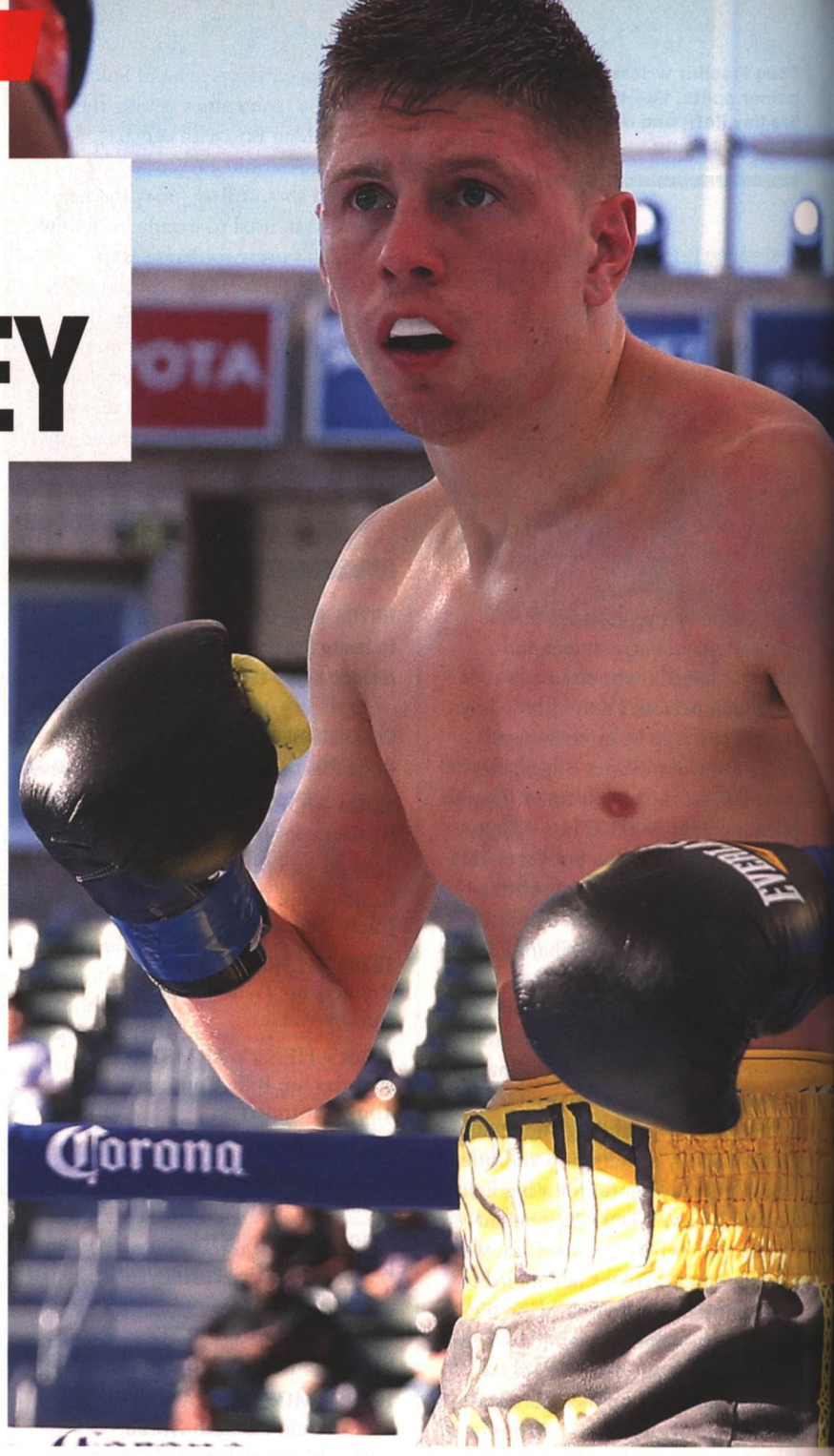
2000s – MANNY PACQUIAO
Runners up: Floyd Mayweather Jr., Bernard Hopkins

2010s – ????

JASON QUIGLEY

THE FORMER IRISH AMATEUR STAR IS BUILDING HIS PRO CAREER IN L.A.

By **Anson Wainwright**



Jason Quigley was a fine amateur. Can he replicate that success as a pro?

As a youngster Jason Quigley enjoyed all sports, taking part in soccer, Gaelic football and the Irish game of hurling. He was in many ways a jack of all trades, master of none.

He became interested in boxing a month before his 10th birthday, when the Donegal boy stayed up late to watch Marco Antonio Barrera's master-class performance against a British icon. It was a pivotal moment for him.

"One of the reasons I started boxing was because of Marco Antonio Barrera," Quigley said. "It was his fight against Naseem Hamed. He made the hair stand up on the back of my neck and showed me I have a passion for boxing from a young age. And then I started it up."

He did well but continued with the other sports. He was invited to try out for then-English Premier League team Fulham Football Club's youth academy and prepared to go. Then he headed to the gym one last time.

"The sweet smell of the gloves, the feeling of getting in the ring, throwing them shots, slipping shots, it was one of them moments I just thought, 'This is for me, this is what I want to do,'" said Quigley, now 24. "I was lucky I understood that feeling and I could take it on. I dropped all the other sports and gave boxing my all."

Quigley has experienced considerable success since then.

In 2013, when he was still an amateur, he was ranked as the No. 1 middleweight in the world and won silver and gold at the World Championships and European Championships, respectively.

As the year wound down, he was looking forward to Christmas when he received a phone call that would change his life. He was offered the opportunity to turn professional under the auspices of Golden Boy Promotions in Los Angeles.

"I went to Golden Boy's offices," he said. "(Golden Boy Chairman and CEO) Oscar (De La Hoya) took us into his office, we sat down and met him. I kept looking at him and saying to myself, 'This is Oscar De La Hoya sitting in front of me.' Of course, I was a bit starstruck."

Quigley signed his new contract the following April.

"There's a lot of promoters out there but there's nobody that has been in the ring and done what Oscar has done," he said. "His experiences inside and outside the ring I think are invaluable. That's one of the main reasons I chose Golden Boy."

The young prospect moved from the quiet backwater of his small hometown to the hustle and bustle of Los Angeles. It was quite an upheaval.

"In every aspect it was a massive change," he said. "Weather-wise, culture-wise, just meeting new people. It was a big change for me."

Quigley made his pro debut on the Canelo Alvarez-Erislandy Lara card in July of last year in Las Vegas. Today, he's 8-0 with eight knockouts – a nice start to a promising career.

De La Hoya sees great potential in his young middleweight.

"Jason Quigley is part of the next generation of European boxers who are about to make their mark on the international stage and we believe he has the skill and determination to go very far in the future," De La Hoya said. "It also doesn't hurt that he has the great nation of Ireland behind him. I know they will support him wherever he goes." RING

THE ESSENTIALS
JASON QUIGLEY

Age: 24

Weight class: Middleweight

Height: 6 feet

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Donegal, Ireland

Record: 8-0 (8 KOs)

Biggest strengths: Excellent amateur pedigree, including a record of 240-10. ★ Impressive athleticism, including fluid movement and fast reflexes. And he is strong. ★ Can punch with both hands. ★ Is constantly tested in high-level sparring in Southern California. ★ Personable and charismatic.

Biggest question marks: Doesn't appear to have elite-level speed. ★ Will he fall in love with his power after having stopped all his opponents?

3 MORE TO WATCH

OLEKSANDR USYK
CRUISERWEIGHT
(8-0, 8 KOs)

The talented Ukrainian entered the pro game in 2013 following a stellar amateur career in which he won gold at the 2011 World Championships and 2012 Olympics. As a pro, he has won all eight of his fights by knockout against respectable opposition. The popular 28-year-old southpaw already has several sponsorship deals with major companies. He is handled by K2 Promotions, which will open doors for him in the U.S.

SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO
MIDDLEWEIGHT
(6-0, 4 KOs)

Derevyanchenko is another from the deep talent-pool in Ukraine. He had a reported amateur record of 390-20 and won bronze at the 2007 World Championships. "The Technician" elected to turn pro after a successful spell in "World Series of Boxing." He has lived up to the hype, including an easy victory in his last fight over the more experienced former title-challenger Elvin Ayala on ShoBox.

MARK MAGSAYO
FEATHERWEIGHT
(11-0, 9 KOs)

The 20-year-old Filipino featherweight has been getting a lot of attention at home for his impressive performances over the past two years, during which time he has remained unbeaten. "Magnifico" is scheduled to make his American debut in October, although no opponent has been selected. Could he be the next Filipino star?

SPIRIT INTACT

Jill Matthews is a fighter through and through.

FORMER CHAMP JILL MATTHEWS HAS NO REGRETS IN SPITE OF SOME TRIBULATIONS

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

Jill Matthews' brush with boxing royalty wasn't the typical one. Then again, "The Zion Lion" never followed a conventional path in or out of the ring. So when she fought Tammy Roberts at the Roxy Theater in Atlanta in August 1999, she was intent on leaving an impression even though her team only wanted her to get a few rounds in before she fought German star Regina Halmich less than a month later.

"Jake LaMotta was there and they had some girl, I don't know where they got her from, but I don't think she ever boxed before," Matthews recalled of the bout. Roberts was, in fact, making her pro debut against a former world champion. Such was the Wild West of women's boxing back in 1999. "And I knocked her through the ropes, right onto Jake LaMotta's plate. And I'm like, 'Yeah, baby!' I got a dirty look from my

trainer and my manager, but the audience, they gave me a standing ovation. They were thrilled."

Everyone who saw Matthews fight during her four-year pro career would share that sentiment. The first woman to win a New York Golden Gloves title in 1995, Matthews was one of the best fighters you never saw, at least if you didn't live in New York City at that time. In the Big Apple, Matthews was a darling of the fight world and the media in part because she was a whirling dervish in the ring, unable to sit back and jab or let the fight come to her.

"When I was in there and fighting, I loved it," the former IWBF and IFBA world junior flyweight champion said. "I wanted to take them out and give it my all. There was no thought of holding back. There was no thinking. My heart and soul was in there and that's all that mattered to me at the time."

It was an ethic she would later bring to a battle with brain cancer.

Matthews' backstory and personality, combined with her ring exploits, created an unforgettable character. The New Yorker was a hairdresser who took up boxing on a lark at 31 and also was the lead singer in a punk rock band, Times Square, which included her husband, lawyer David Turetsky. And she often said whatever came into her head whenever it arrived there, an amusing trait that added to the perception that she was a budding star.

That didn't happen.

When she retired with a 9-4-1 (7 KOs) record after a close loss to future Hall of Famer Halmich, she had no doubt that it was time to go. And Matthews, now 51, holds no ill will toward the sport or its treatment of women.

"There wasn't really anything happening, it was depressing," she said. "You have to realize that I had my first fight in the Gloves at 31 years old. Even later on, I fought Halmich in Germany and she was 22 years old. These were young girls that had kickboxing careers and I was just a tough girl. I was a bully."

She laughs, her vibrance belying the struggle she has gone through since retiring. But anyone who knows Matthews knows her ability to keep her spirit intact.

"People tell me I'm not really sick, it's all in my head," she deadpans. "I go, 'Yeah, hello, it's a brain tumor.' I said (to the tumor), 'Listen, this is the deal, bro: You act up and they will slice you and dice you in the lab when I die. So keep me alive and I promise I will give you a good home.'"

The cancer has been in remission for five years this past July, and Matthews now attacks life with the same spirit she attacked opponents with more than 15 years ago. She and Turetsky adopted their 10-year-old son, Rafael, from Guatemala. And they even got the band back together, with their latest Times Square album, "Hangin' Out," released in August. Musically, it's a trip back in time, just like Matthews' fighting style went back to an era when fighters actually fought.

We may never see the likes of her again.

"The old-school people wanted to see a fight," Matthews said. "They wanted to see you go in there and bust it up. The newer fighters got all technical and castrated and the barroom brawl aspect got taken out of it. No one wants to see a dance; they want to see a fight.

"When I fought, it was do or die. They're trying to get me and I'm gonna take them out as soon as possible." RING

WOMEN'S POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 27-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 33-1 (16 KOs)
Lightweight

3. JACKIE NAVA
Mexico • 32-4-3 (14 KOs)
Junior featherweight

4. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 35-10-1 (19 KOS)
Featherweight

5. LAYLA MCCARTER
U.S. • 36-13-5 (8 KOs)
Lightweight

6. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 23-4-3 (4 KOs)
Flyweight

7. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 22-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight

8. IBETH ZAMORA SILVA
Mexico • 24-5 (9 KOs)
Junior flyweight

9. DIANA PRAZAK
Australia • 13-3 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

10. AVA KNIGHT
U.S. • 13-2-3 (5 KOs)
Flyweight

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BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

Was Leo Santa Cruz's victory over Abner Mares only the start of a compelling rivalry?

LEO SANTA CRUZ MD 12 ABNER MARES

Date: Aug. 29
Site: Staples Center, Los Angeles
Division: Featherweight
Weights: Santa Cruz 124.8 pounds, Mares 125.2
RING ratings (before fight): Santa Cruz No. 2 at junior featherweight; Mares No. 4
Network: ESPN

Leo Santa Cruz and Abner Mares didn't make history, at least not in terms of the sustained fury that made the first 12 rounds in the Erik Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera trilogy so memorable. It wasn't an instant classic. It could be the start of one, though.

An encore, a rematch, appeared inevitable after Santa Cruz and Mares battled for the WBA's featherweight title and Los Angeles supremacy at Staples Center.

Santa Cruz (31-0-1, 17 KOs) prevailed, winning a majority decision with a three-inch reach advantage that allowed him to score often enough with a long jab and right hands that battered and eventually wore down the aggressive Mares (29-2-1, 15 KOs).

On two cards, it was a clear victory for Santa Cruz. Judges Jesse Reyes and Steve Morrow had it 117-111. On Max DeLuca's card, however, it was 114-114, a draw, and one reason for a rematch.

There was some debate about DeLuca's scoring. It didn't appear to account for Santa Cruz's dominance during the middle rounds. Meanwhile, Mares wasn't happy with the margin on the other two cards. He complained that they were one-sided and that he had done enough to win.

Maybe they were. From the start, it was hard to score. Two identical scores were a surprise. But even with that mini-consensus there was room for debate and talk about a rematch. Santa Cruz talked about it. So did Mares. They heard the fans.

At Staples, there was a celebratory mood. Instead of the chorus of boos that still echo from the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao letdown at Las Vegas' MGM Grand on May 2, the 13,109 at Staples sang like a choir during the final rounds. It sounded like they were singing for more.

Then there were the television numbers. An average of 1.217 million, according to Nielsen, watched the ESPN telecast of the best bout offered by Premier Boxing Champions since its debut in March. It was ESPN's biggest boxing audience since 1998.

The sentiment is there. The numbers are there.

"If he wants the rematch, I'll give him the rematch," said Santa Cruz, whose left eye was badly bruised after enduring a bout that – according to a CompuBox – included an astonishing 2,037 punches.

The only question appears to be when. In the wake of his victory, there was talk that Santa Cruz's next fight would be against Gary Russell Jr. It would be easy enough to make. Both are Al Haymon fighters. It wasn't as clear for Mares, who during the post-fight news conference expressed frustration at abandoning the early pressure he applied for a boxing style in the mid-rounds. It was a mistake, he said, that allowed Santa Cruz to use his jab.

"I deserve another chance and the fans deserve another show after a hell of a fight," said Mares, who said it all.

JHONNY GONZALEZ
TKO 2 **KOZUKI HASHIMOTO**
Aug. 1, Morelia, Mexico (Televisa)

Different weight. Same Jhonny Gonzalez.

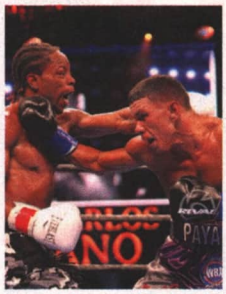
Gonzalez (58-9, 49 KOs) is known for the quick knockout, including a first-round stoppage of Abner Mares at featherweight two years ago.

This time it happened at junior lightweight. In his first bout since losing to Gary Russell Jr., Gonzalez faced little-known Kozuki Hashimoto (11-5, 7 KOs), who was fighting outside of Japan for the first time.

Hashimoto lasted longer than Mares but not by much. A Gonzalez left dropped him in the second. Hashimoto got up but staggered, prompting a stoppage at 2:56 of the round.

The victory set up Gonzalez's second test at 130 pounds, against Jonathan Oquendo on the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Andre Berto card on Sept. 12.

"I have the desire to return to the top," said Gonzalez, who might have to work as fast as ever to get there. He's 33.



NO. 2 JUAN CARLOS PAYANO
SD 12
RAU'SHEE WARREN
Aug. 2, Winter Park, Fla. (Bounce)

Mom is always right, no matter what the scorecards say.

"The world knows you won it," Paulette Warren told her son, Rau'shee.

Trouble is, the world didn't include judges Alex Levin and Thomas Nardone, who scored against Warren in a split-decision loss to Juan Carlos Payano for the WBA bantamweight title.

Levin and Nardone each had it 113-111 against Warren (13-1, 4 KOs), a three-time Olympian who was never able to give his mom the gold medal he once promised her.

The decision sparked outrage. The bruised Payano (17-0, 8 KOs) was knocked down in the 12th. He looked like the loser by every measure except two cards. Carlos Sucre, who probably never argues with his mom, had it 115-109 for Warren despite two one-point deductions for pushing Payano and hitting him when he was down.

A rematch? Safe to say, mom demands one.

PUNGLUANG SOR SINGYU
KO 2 **RYO AKAHO**
Aug. 7, Ratchaburi, Thailand (Channel 7/ Thailand)

A title has always been a piece in the harmony that Pungluang Sor Singyu was taught to seek during his two weeks as a Buddhist monk in his native Thailand.

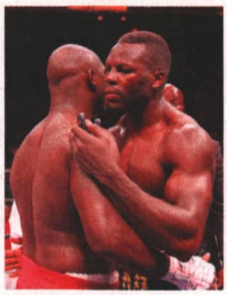
Without a title, he felt incomplete.

Sor Singyu (51-3, 35 KOs) regained one, the WBO's 118-pound version, with an early stoppage of Japan's Ryo Akaho (26-2-2, 18 KOs), who was finished by a combination at 1:08 of the round.

"I will keep this title as long as I can," Sor Singyu told RingTV.com. "I have learned from the past."

He lost the belt to Paulus Ambunda in 2013 and tried to win it back in 2014 against Tomoki Kameda in Las Vegas. Kameda stopped him in the seventh round.

"Now I will train before I relax too much," said Sor Singyu, who has stayed busy – winning five straight – since the Kameda loss.



ANTONIO TARVER
D 12 **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Aug. 14, Newark, N.J. (Spike TV)

Antonio Tarver foresaw a fight with Steve Cunningham as a way to get in line for a big paycheck against Wladimir Klitschko.

But Tarver (31-6-1, 22 KOs) is further from that payday than ever. He looks to be a lot closer to getting his AARP card after he battled through a forgettable split draw with a younger Steve Cunningham (28-7-1, 13 KOs).

"I'm looking for Klitschko," Tarver told ringside media. "They know that. I boxed (Cunningham's) head off. Taking nothing away from him but he went to school against a 46-year-old man."

Tarver's dwindling options might include a broadcast seat on the safe side of the ropes. He's been an effective analyst.

At 39, Cunningham's future looks even less certain. He's 4-5-1 over his last 10 bouts.

KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI
KO 11
NO. 1 MARCO HUCK
Aug. 14, Newark, N.J. (Spike TV)

It's a long way from an undercard to a spot on the Fight of the Year ballot but that's where Krzysztof Glowacki-Marco Huck figures to be after a mid-summer cruiserweight classic.

Glowacki and the favored Huck took the snoozer out of cruiser in a wild bout that also could get consideration for Upset of the Year. Glowacki (25-0, 16 KOs) pulled it off, stunning Huck (38-3-1, 26 KOs) and ending his hopes at defending the WBO's title for a record 14th straight time.

To do it, Glowacki had to get off the deck after a left put him there in the sixth. In the 11th, however, Glowacki, trailing on the cards, landed a left-right combo, dropping Huck, who was finished moments later when the bout was waved off without a count at 2:39 of the round.

LUCIAN BUTE TKO 4 ANDREA DI LUISA

Aug. 15, Montreal (NBC Sports Network)

Nineteen months had come and gone since anybody in Quebec had seen Lucian Bute step through the ropes. That's a long time, long enough for Adonis Stevenson and Sergey Kovalev to exchange a few thousand insults.

But not quite long enough for Bute to be forgotten.

Bute (32-2, 25 KOs) returned with a warm welcome and a predictable fourth-round stoppage of an unknown and overmatched Italian, Andrea Di Luisa (17-3, 13 KOs), in a 171-pound bout.

"I'm back, I'm back," he said to applause from a Bell Centre crowd that gave him a standing ovation and brought him to tears.

It was a new beginning for the popular Bute, whose career was interrupted by a back injury. But all the way back? The real tests will follow against a probable succession of bigger names and better fighters.

NO. 2 CARLOS CUADRAS TKO 5 DIXON FLORES

Aug. 15, Guamuchil, Mexico (Televisa)

Carlos Cuadras, perhaps the best little guy not named Roman Gonzalez, is creating a buzz that is getting hard to ignore.

Call him Super Fly.

Cuadras (33-0-1, 26 KOs) continued to crash the party at 115 pounds with a crushing fifth-round stoppage of Dixon Flores (11-3-2, 3 KOs) of Nicaragua, Gonzalez's home country.

In the fourth defense of a WBC junior bantamweight title he won in 2014 with an eighth-round technical decision over Srisaket Sor Rungvisai, Cuadras made it look easy.

Flores never had a chance. Cuadras applied pressure in the third and fourth rounds and then landed a succession of damaging blows in the fifth, prompting a stoppage at 1:11 of the round.

A rematch with Sor Rungvisai appears to be one option, although Cuadras says he wants to fight fellow Mexican David Sanchez, who is ranked No. 9 by THE RING.

JULIO CEJA TKO 5 NO. 10 HUGO RUIZ

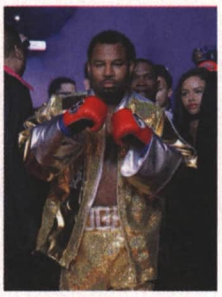
Aug. 29, Los Angeles (ESPN)

Add Julio Ceja to a division already loaded with emerging stars and potential fights. Business at junior featherweight has never looked better.

Ceja (30-1, 27 KOs) crashed the party with a fifth-round TKO of fellow Mexican Hugo Ruiz (35-3, 31 KOs) on a card that featured the more celebrated Leo Santa Cruz and Abner Mares in a 126-pound thriller.

Ceja, who in 2013 lost a bantamweight title shot against Jamie McDonnell in the U.K., staged a comeback that said he would be a threat to the division for a while. He was down on the canvas. Down on the scorecards, too. But he celebrated in the end after battling back with a left that leveled Ruiz at 2:34 of the fifth.

With the win also came an interim version of a belt held by Santa Cruz but Ceja was expected to gain full titleholder status given "El Terremoto's" success at featherweight.



SHANE MOSLEY KO 6 RICARDO MAYORGA

Aug. 29, Inglewood, Calif. (Integrated Sports PPV)

Shane Mosley, a quiet gentleman as a lightweight, welterweight and junior middleweight champion, sounds like a different person on Twitter.

Hand speed used to define him. Social media does now. Mosley delivers tweets at the rate his younger self landed punches.

Anybody who watched him in his best days as a fighter had to wonder on Aug. 29 if he was the same guy. He was. Kind of. At least, it looked as if those hands still possessed some speed and sting against a shopworn Ricardo Mayorga in a middle-aged, middleweight fight.

At 44, Mosley (48-9-1, 40 KOs) showed he could still fight a little, recording his 40th stoppage with a liver shot that dropped the 41-year-old Mayorga (31-9-1, 25 KOs) like a cigarette butt.

What's next? Mosley promised to fight again, perhaps in December. We can only be sure he'll tweet again.

NO. 5 JAMIE MCDONNELL UD 12 NO. 6 TOMOKI KAMEDA

Sept. 6, Corpus Christi, Texas (CBS)

The rematch was supposed to clean up the controversy. It didn't.

Jamie McDonnell won by a wider margin than he did in May, when he eked out a one-point victory on all three cards. This time he scored a knockdown instead of getting knocked down. But controversy still reigned after his 115-112, 116-111, 117-110 decision over Tomoki Kameda.

Anybody for a trilogy?

"I thought I won this fight a lot more clearly," said Kameda (31-2, 19 KOs), who lost 114-113 across the board in the first bout.

He appeared to win the early rounds, yet slowed in the later ones as McDonnell (27-2-1, 12 KOs) began to score with a long jab. To punctuate the match McDonnell took Kameda down with a combo in the 12th.

"That fight felt easier than the first," said McDonnell, who might get the chance to make it even easier in a third.

COMING UP

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND BRIAN HARTY

OCTOBER

GENNADY GOLOVKIN VS. DAVID LEMIEUX

Date: Oct. 17
Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City
Division: Middleweight (for Golovkin's WBA and Lemieux's IBF titles)
TV: Pay-per-view
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Roman Gonzalez vs. Brian Viloria, flyweights (for Gonzalez's RING and WBC titles); Eamonn O'Kane vs. Tureano Johnson, middleweights; Luis Ortiz vs. TBA, heavyweights
Significance: Golovkin (33-0, 30 KOs) is a big favorite to beat Lemieux (34-2, 31 KOs) because he's a better all-around fighter but the clash of knockout artists – a combined 61 KOs in 67 wins – has action-craving fans atwitter. Lemieux got here by beating Gabe Rosado and Hassan N'Dam.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Golovkin KO 7; Fischer – Golovkin KO 10; Harty – Golovkin KO 6

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO VS. TYSON FURY

Date: Oct. 24
Location: ESPRIT Arena, Dusseldorf, Germany
Division: Heavyweight
TV: HBO, RTL
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Cecilia Braekhus vs. TBA, welterweights
Significance: Klitschko (64-3, 53 KOs) faces his most interesting foe since David Haye in 2011. Fury (24-0, 18 KOs) doesn't have exceptional ability but he's big (6-foot-9), talks up a storm and just wins, although this is a big step up in competition. Klitschko has 18 straight successful title defenses.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Klitschko KO 4; Fischer – Klitschko KO 8; Harty – Klitschko KO 10

OCT. 15 – Joseph Parker vs. Kali Meehan, heavyweights, Auckland, New Zealand.
OCT. 16 – Andrzej Fonfara vs. Nathan Cleverly, light heavyweights, Chicago (Spike TV). Also, Kohei Kono vs. Koki Kameda, junior bantamweights (for Kono's WBA title).
OCT. 17 – Lamont Peterson vs. Felix Diaz, welterweights, Fairfax, Va. (NBC). Also, Andre Dirrell vs. Blake Caparello, super middleweights.
OCT. 17 – Donnie Nietes vs. Juan Alejo, junior flyweights (for Nietes' RING and WBO titles), Carson, Calif.
OCT. 17 – Ruslan Chagaev vs. Fres Oquendo, heavyweights, Kiel, Germany.
OCT. 17 – Sam Eggington vs. Frankie Gavin, welterweights, Birmingham, England. Also, Matthew Macklin vs. Jason Welborn, junior middleweights.
OCT. 23 – Rob Brant vs. Louis Rose, middleweights (Showtime)
OCT. 24 – Terence Crawford vs. Dierry Jean, junior welterweights (for Crawford's WBO title), Omaha, Neb. (HBO)
OCT. 24 – Kell Brook vs. Diego Chaves, welterweights (for Brook's IBF title), Sheffield, England

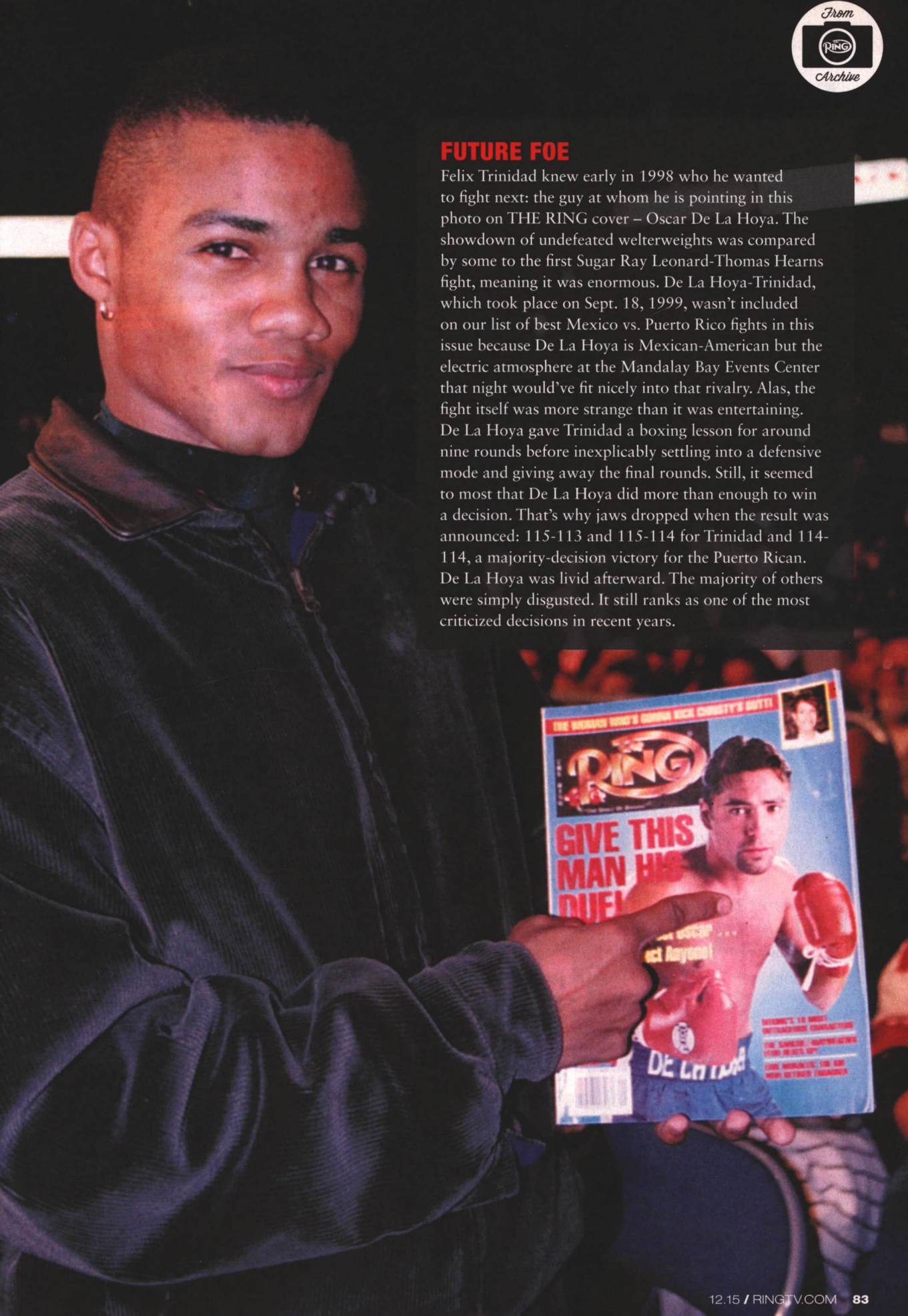
NOVEMBER

NOV. 4 – Alexander Povetkin vs. Mariusz Wach, heavyweights, Kazan, Russia. Also, Denis Lebedev vs. Lateef Kayode, cruiserweights (for Lebedev's WBA title), and Cesar Cuenca vs. Eduard Troyanovksy, junior welterweights (for Cuenca's IBF title).
NOV. 6 – Antoine Douglas vs. Les Sherrington, middleweights, Las Vegas (Showtime).
NOV. 7 – Juergen Braehmer vs. Thomas Oosthuizen, light heavyweights, Monte Carlo, Monaco.
NOV. 14 – Denis Shafikov vs. Rances Barthelemy, lightweights (for vacant IBF title), Las Vegas.
NOV. 21 – Miguel Cotto vs. Canelo Alvarez, middleweights (for Cotto's RING and WBC titles), Las Vegas (HBO Pay-Per-View).
NOV. 21 – Darleys Perez vs. Anthony Crolla, lightweights (for Perez's WBA title), Manchester, England.

The much-anticipated fight between Gennady Golovkin (left) and David Lemieux is set for Oct. 17.

FUTURE FOE

Felix Trinidad knew early in 1998 who he wanted to fight next: the guy at whom he is pointing in this photo on THE RING cover – Oscar De La Hoya. The showdown of undefeated welterweights was compared by some to the first Sugar Ray Leonard-Thomas Hearns fight, meaning it was enormous. De La Hoya-Trinidad, which took place on Sept. 18, 1999, wasn't included on our list of best Mexico vs. Puerto Rico fights in this issue because De La Hoya is Mexican-American but the electric atmosphere at the Mandalay Bay Events Center that night would've fit nicely into that rivalry. Alas, the fight itself was more strange than it was entertaining. De La Hoya gave Trinidad a boxing lesson for around nine rounds before inexplicably settling into a defensive mode and giving away the final rounds. Still, it seemed to most that De La Hoya did more than enough to win a decision. That's why jaws dropped when the result was announced: 115-113 and 115-114 for Trinidad and 114-114, a majority-decision victory for the Puerto Rican. De La Hoya was livid afterward. The majority of others were simply disgusted. It still ranks as one of the most criticized decisions in recent years.



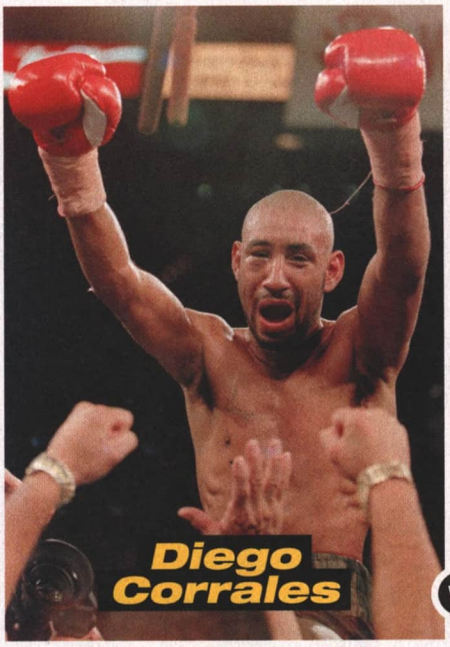
#ATTHEFIGHTS

By **Lamar Clark**

FOR BOXING AFICIONADOS ONLY

OLD SCHOOL vs. NEW SCHOOL

WHO WINS? CAST YOUR VOTE ON INSTAGRAM @ RINGTV!



vs.

#CORRALESATTHEFIGHTS | **#LOMACHENKOATTHEFIGHTS**

TALE OF THE TAPE ★ FEATHERWEIGHT

Diego Corrales		Vasyl Lomachenko
AUG. 25, 1977	BORN	FEB. 17, 1988
SACRAMENTO, CALIF.	BIRTHPLACE	BILHOROD-DNISTROVSKYI, UKRAINE
"CHICO"	ALIAS	"HI-TECH"
ORTHODOX	STANCE	SOUTHPAW
40-5-0 (33 KOs)	RECORD	4-1-0 (2 KOs)
73 PERCENT	KO PERCENTAGE	40 PERCENT
70 INCHES	REACH	65 INCHES

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS

Floyd Mayweather Jr. (top) arrived at the Mayweather Boxing Club in his new $4.8 million Koenigsegg CCXR Trevita. Former champ Laila Ali (above) took part in a youth tennis exhibition at the 2015 U.S. Open.

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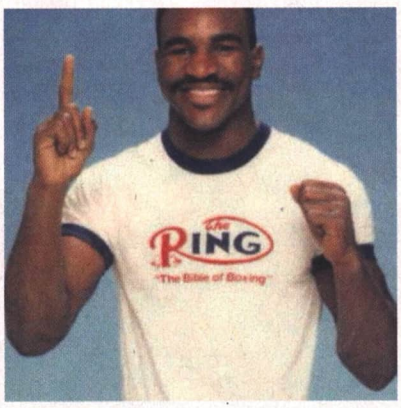
rascalsclobber



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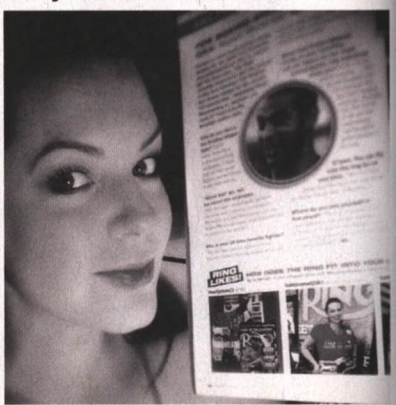

Editor's Note: haleyscomet2061's profile name was misspelled in our September issue, so we brought her back.

IT TAKES SIXTY MINUTES TO COVER
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60 MINUTES
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